ARGUMENTS FOR AN

ARYAN ORIGIN OF THE

South Indian Megaliths

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BY

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I. Introduction and summary of conclusions

The problem of the relationship between the Dravidian languages of South India and the Dravidian spoken (according to results gained in the beginning decipherment of its script, and external evidence to be dealt with below) by the Harappans led me to scrutinize the origin of the South Indian megalithic culture. The introduction of this culture has hitherto generally been connected with the arrival of the Dravidian languages at South India ever since Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in 1953 formulated this theory. Fürer-Haimendorf's other main point was that the introducers of the megaliths came from the Near East, either by sea or by the coastal route. A perusal of the basic reference works on Indian archaeology and the recent (1971) *Bibliography on Indian megaliths* by K. S. Ramachandran shows that these two partly inter-related hypotheses, either singly or together, still have a number of supporters. In fact, one finds that no definite alternative has been offered for the hypothesis of the Dravidian identity of the first megalithic people in South India, and that in spite of all the criticism advanced against it, it continues to be the conclusion of the majority of the writers on the subject.[1]

The examination has led me to the conclusion that the theory of a Dravidian origin of the South Indian megaliths is very unlikely. On the other hand, many things speak for a solution that has hardly been seriously considered before, namely, that the megaliths in South India are of Aryan origin. The possibility of such an explanation did occur to Banerjee, but he emphatically rejected it as out of the question on grounds that have impressed others but which I find inconclusive. The

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1. Cf. Gordon 1960[2] : p. 171 ff.; Subba Rao 1962; Banerjee 1962; Zvelebil 1965; Wheeler 1968 [2]: p. 168 f., Thapar 1971 : p. vi.

excellent new synthetic interpretation of *The Birth of Indian Civilization* (1968) by B. and R. Allchin, with whom I agree on all major points, is here an exception, but even they are vague and hesitant when the South Indian megaliths are concerned.[1]

The investigation brought me to another problem complex, namely that of the vrātyas in the Vedic literature. The vrātyas seem in many respects to hold a key position for our understanding of the Indian protohistory, a position that has hardly been fully comprehended so far. In the present context, however, it is not possible to give proper dimensions to this important subject although my view will become quite clear; but I would like to draw the reader's attention to a forthcoming paper entitled, 'On the protohistory of Indian languages in the light of Archaeology and new textual evidence'. I recognize in the vrātyas perpetuators of the traditions of the chalcolithic black-and-red ware people, whom I am identifying, with B. and R. Allchin, as pre-Vedic Aryans. If this theory is accepted, it is easy to see the bringers of the Iron age to South India as Aryans. The chalcolithic black-and-red ware culture arrived as far South as the Deccan already much earlier than the later waves of the Aryans introduced the iron, and gave the impetus to the abutting of Aryans to South India.

In the present paper I am restricting the study of the vrātyas to such aspects of their cult in the light of which the little understood hints concerning the megalithic religion are assuming altogether new significance, and which partly or at all have not yet received due notice in the studies concerning the vrātyas. Thus, I am endeavouring to make the point that Rudra, as the ambivalent god of death and recreation, is the god par excellence of the vrātyas, who represent his 'troops' (gaṇa, vrāta): armed nomadic bands. This explanation would account for the great number of

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1. "There seems to be every reason to associate the primary introduction of iron, though not necessarily its secondary diffusion throughout South India, with the later waves of Indo-Iranian speaking invaders around 1000 B.C." (p. 326) . . . "However, it seems clear that the continuing progress of the diffusion may largely have been in indigenous hands. Be this as it may . . ." (p. 327).

weapons in the megalithic graves. From the texts it is clear that the vrātya 'groups' did not consist exclusively of warriors but were of heterogenous nature; comprising also all sorts of charlatans and handworkers and resembling in many respects the modern nomadic castes of South India. As gipsy-like travelling blacksmiths, tinkers and potters, selling their services to the settled population, they would by their very nature provide an easy explanation for the comparatively rapid diffusion of the megalithic culture traits over the large area involved, and to its astonishingly uniform character which has hitherto remained problematic. The tridents found in several megalithic graves have given reason to a longer excursus on Rudra's characteristic weapon, in the course of which I am suggesting a new possibility of interpreting his name Tryambaka. In view of the colours connected with Rudra (red and black), it might be that even the black-and-red ware, and the black yet also red (rusty: lohita) metal, iron, had symbolic significance; in the pravargya ritual, which is of pre-Vedic vrātya origin, the pot is identified with Rudra. The relation of the megaliths with the caityas and stūpas, and the burial monuments and dead cult of the vrātyas is also one of the central themes.

The picture that thus emerges regarding the megalithic religion is corroborated by the fitness of the explanation it would provide also to the problem concerning the origin of the popular cult of Aiyanar in South India. A solution to the problem of the linguistic identity of a particular culture has, of course, bearing on the larger framework, and must be considered as an integral part of this whole in our case the early history of the Indian language families in general. Once we have committed some correlations between the archaeological and linguistic evidence, we are obliged to test how the theory fits the entire body of facts and, even if in a tentative manner only, try to make a synthetic interpretation of the entire problem complex. Thus, if it cannot be accepted that the Dravidian languages came to South India with the megalithic culture, some other, more satisfactory solution must be found for the "Dravidian problem". While reserving a more comprehensive and systematic presentation for a later publication, issues that are of immediate relevance for the subject particularly the prehistory of the Dravidian languages, will be dealt with in this paper.

I agree with the Allchins that the neolithic people of the Deccan probably spoke Dravidian, and suggest that Dravidian languages came from the north-west together with the cultural impulses suggested by the Allchins. I insist that the Harappan language belonged to the Dravidian group and possibly, on grounds to be discussed elsewhere, was closer to the hypothetic proto-South-Dravidian than the other branches. It is further suggested that the Dravidian languages reached India with the pre-Harappan neolithic cultures of the fourth millennium B.C. (representing the primitive Dravidian) through Baluchistan and Afghanistan from South Turkmenistan.

II. Examination of the archæological and linguistic evidence relating to the South Indian megaliths

1. *The background and general remarks:*

11. It may be useful to give first a survey of the archæological evidence relating to the neolithic and chalcolithic cultures of the pre-megalithic South India.[1]

The 'mesolithic' hunting and gathering life apparently started receding before a neolithic culture in South India around the middle of the third millennium B.C., or perhaps even little earlier.[2] Herding of humped cattle, sheep and goats became the main livelihood of the people, but there is evidence also for some grain production. This 'Southern neolithic', which is characterized by ground stone axes and which extends from the Deccan to the extreme south of the peninsula, may owe its origin to influences which came from the pre-Harappan cultures of the Indus valley and Baluchistan (this suggestion of F. R. Allchin is considered as most likely also by Fairservis 1971: p. 328 ff.).

In the Deccan, bronze and copper objects with other new elements begin to appear around 1800 B.C.; somewhat later, around 1400 B.C.,

1. I am here only offering a very condensed resume of what seems to be the most reliable interpretation: B. and R. Allchin 1968: p. 161-170 and 325-327, with references on p. 348.

2. The Allchins have ignored the Near Eastern evidence suggesting that in the third millennium B. C. the radiocarbon dates can be as much as 500 years too low. Compare, for instance, their dating of the Harappan civilization (p. 140 f.) with the remarks of Lambert-Karlovsky (1972: p. 227 f.). I have accordingly modified the date given as "ca. 2300" (p. 163) for the beginning of the Southern neolithic.

new sorts of pottery become common, and from this phase comes also the first evidence for horse in South India. These intrusive traits have been traced to the north, particularly Mālwa and Jorwe, where new cultural elements of Iranian origin have reached already earlier. Otherwise the Deccan chalcolithic culture shows "every indication of remarkable continuity" (p. 166) of traditions starting with the neolithic. Also the burial customs appear to be uniform throughout, the normal being extended inhumations with some grave goods among the settlement.

12. There is a consensus among the archæologists regarding the intrusive nature of the succeeding 'megalithic' culture in South India.[1] New burial practices, and other accompanying traits like iron-smelting which certainly did not originate in the peninsular India make their appearance and, by the fourth century B.C., extend all over South India, to last long till the early centuries of the Christian era. The earlier side of the chronology is a matter of debate. While "radiocarbon dates of Paiyampalli, Kotia and Halingali give a central date range well within the fourth century B.C. for the earlier side" (Ramachandran 1969–70), the radiocarbon determinations from Hallur place the introduction of iron to the Deccan immediately after its introduction in North India around 1000 B.C. (this latter date is supported both by the literary evidence of the Veda, and C–14 dates from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar). Although the Hallur dates have been questioned, they would conform to the general pattern of rapid diffusion of iron smelting after ca. 1200 B.C.[2]

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1. Gordon 1960[2]: p. 170 f. and 172; Wheeler 1968[2]: p. 167; Subba Rao 1962: p. 144; Banerjee 1962: p. 186, etc.
2. cf. B. and R. Allchin, 1968: p. 220; Thapar 1971: p. V. These finds of course have antiquated the basis of Furer-Haimendorf's argument (1953: p. 131) that "in most parts of Northern India, iron occurs later than in the South", and that "archaeological evidence excludes . . . a gradual spread of an iron-using culture from Northern India through middle India towards the South" (p. 130 f.) Also "the supposition that a knowledge of iron metallurgy arose on Indian soil, possibly in Bihar", accepted by Zvelebil (1965: p. 66), seems most unlikely.

B. and R. Allchin note regarding the Deccan chalcolithic cultures that "during the final centuries of the second millennium B.C., in a period in which there are many indications of intrusive elements from the north and west, a significant change is seen in the burial customs, with the appearance of pits lined with stone slabs, in graveyards remote from the settlements. This new practice may be regarded as the herald of the Iron age burial rites of peninsula" (1968 p. 316). They associate this change with the first appearance of iron in the South (p. 223; cf. also p. 219,. 220). In any case the megalithic burial in South India belongs to the iron age (cf. ibid., p. 326).

13. It has been rightly observed that the complex pattern of widely different burial practices that are all lumped together and comprised in the term 'megalith' is the result of a mingling of various traditions and developments during a long period.[1]

Some of the 'megalithic' grave types "appear as developments of the indigenous Neolithic Chalcolithic burial customs of the Deccan" (B. and R. Allchin 1968: p. 229). There is no doubt that a fusion of the earlier and the intruding culture took place. The descendents of the neolithic people must have adopted useful new techniques, while the newcomers had to adjust themselves to the local conditions and practices. If the invaders came by land, as seems most likely for reasons that we shall soon consider, then the sea trade with the Near East during the first millennium B.C., for which there is enough evidence, could reasonably have brought in some further extra elements.

2. *The linguistic evidence and the introduction of the megalithic culture*:

21. Even if we accept ca. 1000 B.C. (instead of ca. 500 B.C.) as the beginning of the iron age in South India, Fürer-Haimendorf was certainly right in emphasizing that "the interval between the time of their [scil. the

1. Cf. e. g. Dikshit (1969) and Sarkar (1969).

megalithic people's] expansion over the Deccan and early historic times is so brief that the complete disappearance of the language of so large and advanced a population is beyond the realms of possibility" (1953 : p. 130). The earliest Tamil inscriptions and the most ancient texts of the Tamil literature—which presuppose an earlier tradition—date from the last centuries B.C. (But there is evidence for the presence of the Dravidian speech in South India even in the 10th century B.C.; cf. below § 51). Ever since this beginning of the historical records over two thousand years ago, Dravidian languages have been predominant in South India. As the megaliths represent the only "cultural conquest" (Wheeler 1968² : p. 167) after the introduction of the neolithic way of life, Fürer Haimendorf's second conclusion seems also likely to be true: "there are only two possibilities; either the earlier stone-axe people, shifting cultivators of very primitive material equipment, were the original Dravidian speakers, or the intruding megalith-builders with their developed iron-industry, brought the Dravidian languages and imposed them ultimately on the whole of Southern India." (ibid.)

The third conclusion of Fürer-Haimendorf's however, cannot be subscribed rightaway. He writes: "It is highly improbable that the speech of the more primitive neolithic population, whose culture was superseded by a more advanced population, could have persisted, while that of the populous and dynamic megalith-builders disappeared without any trace. In other words: if the megalith-builders did *not* speak Dravidian languages, what languages did they speak?" (1953 : 130). It is true that "even today we see how one tribal dialect after the other disappears" (ibid.) under the pressure of surrounding major languages which are socially and politically more important. But is it certain that the first introducers of the megalithic culture were more numerous, and that their language was socially and politically more important than that of the earlier inhabitants? In spite of their revolutionary equipment of warfare, the Aryan invaders were quickly absorbed linguistically in the Near East (cf. Kammenhuber 1968 : p. 19). If the first bearers of megalithic culture were, as it seems to me, largely travelling magicians, thinkers, etc., somewhat like the later gypsies, they were to a large extent dependent on the earlier population and had every reason to learn their language; after a

few bilingual generations they could have largely abandoned their original language, even if they otherwise carried on with the same way of life. Such nomadic nature would also fit the archæological evidence : "The thinness of the occupation levels in the settlements so far excavated is perplexing . . . The horse-furniture, if it could be assigned to graves early in the series, might indicate that the first users of iron in south India were at least in part nomadic" (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 232).

The earlier inhabitants, on the other hand, seem to have, by and large, continued their traditional way of life, so much so that the Dravidian languages do not owe their origin to the same people who produced the Neolithic cultures there. This view was advanced by one of us in 1960, and discoveries since that time have all tended to reinforce it" (1968 : p. 326 f.). "Certainly the excavated settlements do not give much indication of any major change in the way of life accompanying the arrival of iron. One is left with a feeling of a remarkable conservatism among the population of south India throughout the period. There can be little doubt that many of the traits already established in the Neolithic period persisted right through the Iron Age" (ib. p. 232). Thus "there is an extraordinary continuity linking even the earliest settlements with the whole subsequent pattern of life . . . It is interesting to note that local variations in grain utilization at the present day are already reflected during the Neolithic-Chalcolithic period. The house patterns of the earliest settlements, and the general layout of villages can also be found as living elements in the countryside today . . ." (ib. p. 325 f)

In any case, Banerjee is right both in asking "what happened to the languages of the earlier primitive neolithic folks of south India" and in replying that "if at all any different language was spoken by them, it could not but offer some loan words [and other substratum influences] to the invading language" (1962 : p. 180).

It is not very easy to answer how the Dravidian languages reached South India. I am of the opinion that the Dravidian languages came to India with the pre-Harappan cultures of Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Indus Valley in the fourth millennium B.C. Such a linguistic relation of

South India with the North-west would support the Allchins' theory according to which the Southern Neolithic owes its origin (and, I would add, its language) to impulses from the early cultures of North-West India (1968 : p. 168, 325). As noted above, this theory is subscribed also by Fairservis (1971 : p. 328 ff.). At that time, when the country was very thinly populated, even a small but economically prosperous group of immigrants could have succeeded in imposing its language on the aboriginal inhabitants. There is meagre but important positive evidence for an intimate relation between the Harappan Dravidian and the Dravidian of South India, but its discussion must be left to a later publication. Certain proof for Harappan contacts with South India is provided by the fichsite vase found from Mohenjo-Daro : This mineral is extremely rare and could hardly have come from anywhere else than Mysore; cf., also for other similar cases, B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 27.

22. Fürer-Haimendorf's thesis that there is no trace of any other language than Dravidian which could be connected with the arrival of the megalithic people is not true. We have ample evidence of the presence of the Aryan speech and culture in South India at least in the third century B.C. The infiltration of Prakrit speakers, which in all probability began many centuries earlier should also be somehow reflected in the archæological evidence, and chronologically the megalithic culture would offer here an ideal parallel.

It may be useful to summarize here the evidence relating to the presence of Aryans in South India at the dawn of its history, even though it probably is well known to the majority of the readers.

The Sātavāhanas who ruled the Telugu country from the first century B.C. onwards, used Prakrit as their administrative language. The earliest inscriptions from Tamilnadu date from the second century B.C. They are written in caves in Tamil language with the Brahmi script, and bear evidence for Buddhist and Jaina faiths, containing also some Prakrit loanwords, such as *amaṇṇaṉ* : Prakrit *samaṇa* : Skt. *śramaṇa* 'Jaina monk', or *sutaṉ* : *suta* 'son' (Mahadevan 1968). There are Prakrit loanwords also in the early Tamil literature, and they appear to have come from the Ardhamāgadhī (used by the Jains) rather than from

the (Buddhist) Pāli: cf. Tamil *pēy* 'demon' : Amgdh. *peya*: pāli *peta*: Skr. *preta* 'spirit of dead' (Filliozat 1963 : p. 269; 1969 p. 82). Sanskrit borrowings are few and later, but in almost all ancient Tamil texts there are references to Vedic or Brahmanical rites, which have reached Tamilnad in any case before the 5th century A.D. (Filliozat 1969: p. 79). In Sanskrit epics as well as in Tamil and Malayalam sources Agastya and Paraśurāma are mentioned as the introducers of the brahmanical culture to Tamilnad and Kerala respectively (cf. Filliozat 1955 : p. 289 f.). The Aryan colonization of Ceylon, which has rightly or wrongly, been connected with the story of Rāmāyaṇa, has been estimated to have taken place in the 5th century B.C. by sea from the Western India (Filliozat 1947: p. 246); Maloney (1970: p. 607 ff.) however, has brought to light evidence according to which this should have happened as late as at the time of Alexander the Great. Buddhism reached the island through Aśoka's missionaries in the third century B.C. In the peninsula, Aśoka's inscriptions in Prakrit [meant to be understood by the common people] testify to the presence of Prakrit speakers as far South as Isila near Brahmagiri in Mysore. The second and thirteenth rock edict mention the three Tamil kingdoms *Coḍā, Pāṇḍiyā* and *Kelalaputto* besides *Satiyaputto* as neighbouring countries (in the same manner as the realm of Antiochos in the North West), and Ceylon. There is clear evidence of cultural contact between the Pāṇḍya kingdom and the capital of Magadha even in the fourth century B.C., for in 300 B.C. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador at Pāṭaliputra, refers to both the Tamil pearl fishery and to the legends connected with the goddess of the Pāṇḍya capital Madurai (Dessigane, Pattabiramin and Filliozat 1960: p. xii ff.; Filliozat 1969: p. 76 f.). Also the Arthaśāstra mentions places of South India from which pearls were imported (cf. Maloney 1970: p. 607 f.). It is possible that the Mysore area formed a part of the dominion not only of Chandragupta but even of the Nandas, in the earlier quarters of the fourth century B.C. (Smith 1958[1] : p. 98; Sircar 1955: p. 33). The tradition connects the emigration of the Digambara sect of the Jainas from Magadha to Śravaṇa Belgola in Mysore with Candragupta Maurya (cf. Smith 1958 : p. 99); such an emigration into a totally non-Aryan territory would hardly have been possible. It has also been pointed out that the tolerance and even approval of the South Indian cross-cousin

marriage in the Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra (1.1, 2.1 ff), which classifies the Deccan as *samkīrṇayoni* referring to racial mixture of Aryans and non-Aryans, (ib. 13) presupposes naturally "a much earlier penetration of the Aryan settlers into the land inhabited from still earlier times by Dravidian speakers" (Banerjee 1962 : p. 184). Aryan kingdoms have existed in the northern parts of the Deccan already in the sixth century B.C. or even earlier, for Vidarbha, which is fairly unanimously identified with modern Berar, is mentioned both in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (7,34)—which also makes the first mention of the Āndhras (Telugus), as a country bordering on the Aryan area (7,18)—and in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (2,442) [1], as well as in the vaṁśas of the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upanisad (2, 5, 22; 4, 5, 28). The country of Aśmaka on the Godavari river, which seems to be known to Pāṇini (4, 1, 173), is mentioned in the Buddhist canon as a kingdom existing in Buddha's time (cf. Sircar 1955 : p. 33).

3. *The characteristic traits of the South Indian megaliths:*

Let us now consider the archaeological clues to the origin of the megalithic culture and their interpretation. There are many and very different types of 'megalithic' graves in South India, and their distribution "is far wider than any one culture region" (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 223). It seems, however, unnecessary to repeat here their entire typology which can be found in many publications) and is of secondary importance here. It may only be pointed out that "certain modes of burial and funerary adjuncts . . . are to some extent regional, but the megalithic grave with a porthole stone cist has a very wide distribution covering the whole of the area of this culture complex" (Gordon 1960[2] : p. 175).

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1. Sircar (1955 : p. 33) gives an incorrect reference to the Jaiminiya Upanisad Brahmana, but the error is found already in his apparent source, in Macdonell and Keith (1912), where also the page number of JAOS 19 where Oertel published this chapter of the JB (numbered there 2,440) is given wrongly as 103 instead of 100.

2. Cf. Gordon 1960[2] : p. 174; Wheeler 1968[2] : p. 160 f.; B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 227; Thapar 1971 : p. iv.

More important than the typology of the graves are the common traits uniting the entire peninsular group of 'megalithic'[1] burials. These typical traits, which have long been recognized, seem to accompany the 'megaliths' from the very beginning and thus provide most important clues about the character and identity of their introducers. They are as follows:

——— a distinctive pottery, the so called *black-and-red ware*, which is achieved by "inverted firing, so that the top and inside of the pot, in direct contact with the fire, turn black whilst the lower part (upper in firing) is a terracotta red" (Wheeler 1968[2] : p. 161; more details in Gordon 1960[2] : p. 173 f.). An earlier white-painted variety and a later russet coated variety are discerned (cf., e.g., B. and R. Allchin 1968: p. 302).

——— *iron* tools and weapons of largely identical types are almost universally and in quantities found as grave goods, including flat axes, hoes and adzes, sickles, spears, arrow and spear heads, knives, swords, tridents, tripods, lamps; bronze and gold objects are found, too.[2] Among the objects, the obviously ritual iron *tridents,* in one case with an iron buffalo attached to the shaft, (compared by the Allchins with the buffalo vehicle of Yama, the Hindu god of death) have long attracted attention and been compared with the *Śaiva triśūlas.*[3]

——— *horse* bones, bells, bridle bits and other horse furniture have been found in some of the megaliths, and suggest that the early megalith builders were equestrians.[4]

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1. Krsnaswami 1949; Wheeler 1968[2] : p. 153-58 B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 223-225
2. Cf. B. and R. Allchin, 1968 : p. 227-9 (with figures); Wheeler 1968[2] : p. 161; Gordon 1960[2] : p. 173 and fig. 24. The finds of gold and bronze objects (B. and R. Allchin 1968 p. 220) invalidate Furer-Haimendorf's argument (1953 : p. 131) that "any people coming from Northern India, where bronze axe cultures flourished, would also have brought some copper and bronze implements and not exclusively iron."
3. Cf. Babington (1823); Gordon 1960[2] : p. 174; B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 229 and 317 f.
4. Cf. Ramachandran 1961; Gordon 1960[2] : p. 180 f.; B. and R. Allchin 1968; p. 229 and 232; Thapar 1971; p. vi-vii.

——— "where adequately recorded, the burials are those of bones collected after excarnation or flesh-removal elsewhere"[1]).

4. General remarks on the parallels; the North-Eastern megaliths:

Let us now consider the parallels of these features outside the peninsular India, and the theories that have been based on them. It is most convenient to distinguish two main groups, namely;

——— parallels in Egypt and the Near East, and theories according to which the megalithic culture arrived from these regions either by sea or by the coastal route, and

——— parallels in North India, Iran, the Caucasus region and Central Asia, which may reasonably be adduced as evidence for an Aryan origin.

It may be noted that the megaliths on the Makran coast and near Karachi occupy a middle position, and have been referred to as evidence for the migration route by the advocates of both theories.

Mention must also be made of megaliths in North-East India, with regard to which Fürer-Haimendorf's point of view seems to have won fairly general acceptance. He considers this group of megaliths, which still forms a living tradition among the tribal people, to be of South-East Asian origin and to have nothing to do with the Southern megaliths, from which they differ also in function, being mainly memorials and not graves[2]. Subba Rao's (1962 : p. 137) suggestion of a blending of the megalithic idea coming from South-East Asia and of pre-existing grave goods in central or South India appears very unlikely.

5. Evidence for Near-Eastern and Dravidi n origin:

51. The evidence supplied by the Near Eastern texts suggests the presence of the Dravidians in South India well in the earlier half of the

1. Wheeler 1968[2] : p. 161; cf. also Gordon 1960[2] : p. 175; B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p 317; Thapar 1971 : p. v-vi.
2. Cf. Wheeler 1968[2] : p. 150 ff., p. 168, and the basic publications listed on p. 187; Thapar 1971 : p. ii-iii.

first millennium or even tenth century B.C., which would imply that they were in South India before the megalithic culture was introduced (cf. Rabin 1968 : p. 12). The Old Testament records Dravidian loanwords for merchandise of clearly Indian origin, such as, e.g., Hebrew *tukki* 'peacock', imported according to the First Book of Kings (10 : 22) by Solomon (10th century B.C.), which can be compared with Dravidian *tōkai* 'peacock's tail'; this word is certainly native Dravidian, the basic meaning 'tail' being probably derived from the verbal root meaning 'to hang down.'[1] Peacock is native in the Indian subcontinent only. Exotic birds, probably peacocks, had been imported from India (Melahha) already by the Sumerians,[2] and also the Buddhist Bāveru Jātaka testifies to the export of peacocks from India to Babylon (=Bāveru).[3] From the latter half of the first millennium the evidence for maritime trade between South India and the mediterranean region becomes more abundant. Brahmi script used by Aśoka in the third century B.C. is of Semitic origin and was probably introduced to India by sea-faring merchants. Around the beginning of our era, a very detailed description of this trade is given in the anonymous Greek text entitled "The Circumnavigation of the Red Sea", and this is confirmed by the archaeological evidence of the Roman trading colonies on the east coast of South India, in Arikamedu near Pondichery and elsewhere.

This brisk trade with the Near East may have contributed to the variety of the megalithic burial customs, since, as Rabin (1968 : p.

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1. Cf. OED 2916 tokai 'tail, tail of peacock', 2863 tonku 'to hang down, tail' and 2777. For other examples and details of the Near Eastern evidence see Rabin 1968.

2. Cf. Falkenstein 1963 ; p. 252.

3. Cf. Bāveru Jātaka (cited according to D. Andersen, A pāli Reader I, third ed., Copenhagen 1917, p 18, 1. 17ff); *Punavare te vanija ekam mayurara janam gahetva yatha accharasaddena vassati panippaharasaddena naccati evam sikkhapetva Baverurattham agamamsu. So mahajane sannipatite navaya dhure thatva pakkhe vidhunitva madhurassaram niccharetva nacci. Manussa tam disva somanassajata "etam ayyo sobhaggappattam susikkhitasakunara-janam amhakam detha" iti . . .*

4. Wheeler 1946; Casal 1949; Damilica 1, 1970, for new sites.

12) remarks, "travelling to India with the monsoon winds was not the same as sailing to other countries: it was not possible to return at once after having completed buying and loading, but one had to wait for months for the monsoon to change direction . . ."

The comparisons and suggestions made by B. and R. Allchin are thus possible: "Stone cist graves, with and without port-holes, are found in the Levant, and on the coasts of South Arabia. Pottery sarcophagi occur in Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf region during the late centuries B.C., and legged urns identical to Indian types are reported from Yemen. The same regions provide evidence of rock-cut graves with shaft-like entrances, in forms strikingly reminiscent of those of the Malabar coast. Strictly speaking not all these examples are dated with any precision, and therefore they can scarcely provide a firm basis for comparisons; but they suggest that during the first millennium B.C. India received them as influences by dint of maritime contacts with the Middle East" (1968 : p. 229 f.). But these Near Eastern parallels can hardly be considered as the primary source of the South Indian megalithic culture. Below, we shall return to the Syro-Palestinian megaliths.

The old theories according to which the megaliths in India as everywhere else in the world are a diffusion of the 'Heliolithic' culture of Egypt[1] have in a way been revived by an Indian archæological expedition to Nubia. The possibility of a relation between the megalithic culture of South India on one hand, and of the Nubian black-and-red ware, dating from pre-iron period (ca. 1500 B.C. or earlier) and the accompanying graves that are partially analogous with those of South India on the other, has seriously if with caution been suggested by B. B. Lal (1963, 1967). There are, however, considerable differences; for instance, articulated skeletons in contracted position contrast with the fractional burials of South India. One might also argue that the technique of the black-and-red ware, which is widespread in space and

1. Cf. B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 229, and e.g. H. G. Wells, The outline of History, 4th ed., London 1925, p. 80.

time, is relatively simple —the firing does not require any special kiln— and could have easily developed independently in different regions (cf. Wheeler 1968[2] : p. 165; B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 291). Aside from the difficulty of missing links, the parallelism does not seem so striking that it would warrant such conclusions as that by Zvelebil : "there must have been, some time in the fourth to third millennia B.C., a common centre of diffusion, a strip of land extending from Eastern Africa or Southern Arabia through the Persian Gulf to North-eastern Iran, which may well be termed 'the home' of the Black-and-Red Ware Folk -- the Proto-Dravidians" (1965 : p. 68; cf. also 1969 : p. 4). As there are no other non-Aryan languages that could be considered to be related to the megalithic culture than Dravidian in South India, and as the origin of the Dravidian languages moreover is disputed, it is understandable that Fürer-Haimendorf could assign the origin of Dravidian to his 'invaders by sea'. But we may well ask, and with much more reason if they should have come by land, where in the voluminous texts of the Near East covering such a long period are the traces of the presence and motions of large numbers of Dravidian speakers in those regions, and where, vice versa, is a generally accepted evidence of Semitic, Elamite etc. influence on the Dravidian language that would also be implied?[1] In fact, as Zvelebil himself admits (cf. 1965 : p. 69 n. 3), the "most promising, and the most convincing hypothesis" as to the origin of Dravidian languages is that which relates them with the Ural-Altaic languages and thus derives them from Central Asia (cf. Zvelebil 1971 : p. 22 and the literature cited there; cf. also Andronov 1970: p. 193.f.)

53. The sea-route theory, which was advocated by V. Gordon Childe (1947) and D. H. Gordon (1960[2] : p. 181 f.) and which still has several supporters among Indian archæologists,[2] was chosen by Fürer-

1. Literature on the subject is by no means missing : See Zvelebil 1970 : p. 21. On Elamite cf. also I. Diakonoff in Antiquity 1970, p. 49.

2. Cf. B. B. Lal (1962) above, and e.g. K. N. Dikshit (1969) paraphrased by Ramachandran (1971 : p. 111) as follows : "It is likely that the Western Asiatic Maritime communities practicing megalithic architecture entered South India through the Persian Gulf or Southern Arabia in the hope of founding a new colony. They perhaps, reached the Western coast towards the close of the second millennium B.C. and by and by penetrated the hinterland of Mysore and other regions of Deccan and south India."

Haimendorf on grounds that have turned out to be false. It has already been noted above that further archæological research has antiquated the basis of his arguments relating to the spread of iron working in India, and the absence of bronze objects.

531. One of Fürer-Haimendorf's main arguments, which impressed Gordon (1960[2] : p. 171) and Wheeler (1968[2] : p. 169) was the equation of the maps of distribution of the Dravidian languages on one hand and of the megaliths on the other; this was backed up with the conclusion, "it appears now extremely unlikely that in Northern India there was ever a Dravidian-speaking population, though small colonies may have existed on the coast of what is now Western Pakistan" (Fürer-Haimendorf 1953 : p. 132).

Already in 1954 Emeneau (p. 287 n. 23) pointed out that Fürer-Haimendorf's hypothesis is automatically ruled out by the acceptance of any of the examples of Dravidian loanwords in the Ṛgveda, which is "evidence for the presence of Dravidian speakers as far towards the northwest as the Panjab, i.e., the upper Indus Valley, in the first centuries (it is uncertain how many) of the presence of Sanskrit-speakers on Indian soil" (ibid. p. 287). At present it is almost universally agreed that "the Dravidian origin of several Vedic words has been convincingly established" (Gonda 1971 : p. 209), not only in the Ṛgveda but also in later Vedic works, and "in any case the Dravidisms in the Veda attest the presence of Dravidians in many regions of North India at that period" (ibid.). D.C. Sircar (1955 : p. 34) also rightly objected against interpreting the uncivilized present-day Dravidian tribes of North India, who have nothing to do with the megalithic culture of Deccan, as immigrants from the South. "It is clear from the geographical nature of the boundaries between the three families in Central India that the northern boundary of Dravidian is and has been for a long time retreating south before the expansion of Indo-Aryan, and that the small island of Dravidian speech north of the main boundary are isolated patches that have not yet become extinct" (Emeneau 1956 : p. 6).

In this connection we may also refute the compromise solution proposed by N. R. Banerjee (1962), who would attribute the introduction of "megalithism and its attendant cultural milieu, which they had reasonable chance of picking up on their southward journey" (p. 189) to Dravidians who, after having inhabited earlier North India, "yielded ground to the oncoming and expanding Aryans and were being pushed down southwards. On their onward journey it was natural that some stuck to their lands and were left behind . . . such were . . the Brahui . . . and the Oraons and Malers . . . Gond tribes" (p. 185). Emeneau is certainly right in observing that the early Dravidian influence on Sanskrit "of course means much bilingualism and gradual abandonment of Dravidian speech in favour of Indo-Aryan over a long period and a great area" (1956 : p. 6). Very pertinent in our context is his express remark: "This is the historical process to be evoked, rather than the too facile and unrealistic one of a general displacement of populations through expansions. Undoubtedly there were expansions involved, in the shape of marauding bands and of missionaries, but neither of these agencies had an interest in getting rid of earlier populations; it was to their advantage, political, economic, religious, to have subjects and proselytes. Absorption, not displacement, is the chief mechanism in radical language changes of the kind we are considering" (ibid. n. 4. Cf. also Krishnamurti 1969 : p. 324 f.) We may also ask from whom did the alleged Dravidian introducers pick up *en route* the megalithic traits? If the pre-Aryan Dravidians did not possess megaliths and the characteristic accompanying traits, can they at all be considered as their introducers?

532. Returning to Fürer-Haimendorf's arguments, neither is the concept (cautiously suggested, it is true) of "the close integration and compactness of the Dravidian language group" which "fits the assumption of a comparatively recent Dravidian expansion" (1953 : p. 134) approved of by the specialists. Even if the lexicostatistic method connot be trusted, the results of Andronov's studies (1964) in the disintegration of the primitive Dravidian give a rough indication of the time involved, and fit the prevalent schemes of affiliation. "According to lexico-statistic count, the beginnings of the disintegration of the Proto-Dravidian are to be sought in the separation of Brahui which seems to have taken place 'in

the very beginning of the 4th Millennium B.C.' ", while the separation of the Central and South Dravidian branches is placed "well before 15th century B.C." (Zvelebil 1971 : p. 18). The presence of the Brahui language in Baluchistan can thus hardly be adduced as evidence for a Dravidian introduction of the megalithic culture from the Near East in the middle of the first millennium B.C. I would rather suggest that it provides an additional proof for the language of the Harappans being Dravidian : other proofs are supplied by the Harappan inscriptions[1] and the Vedic Dravidisms referred to above.[2] For it is now generally agreed that the Harappan civilization has developed out of the pre-Harappan cultures which expanded to the Indus Valley from Baluchistan and Afghanistan and which ultimately can be traced back to the neolithic cultures of South Turkmenistan.[3] This picture also tallies with the hypothesis of an Ural-Altaic and Dravidian relationship which has gained a wider support among experts than any other.

533. The megalithic black-and-red ware, including its early white painted variety, is closely paralleled by that of the Deccan chalcolithic cultures of the second millennium B.C. "In view of the close affinities in fabrics and the contiguity of the so-called megalithic and non-megalithic areas with the same type of pottery, it is very difficult to postulate two diverse origins to this ceramic industry" (Subba Rao 1962 : p. 135). The derivation of the megalithic pottery from the West Indian chalcolithic ware seems indeed be beyond doubt (cf. B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 219-223).

The chalcolithic and megalithic black-and-red ware show graffiti, which B. B. Lal (1960) has compared with the Harappan script, with the

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1. It lies outside the scope of this paper to deal with its partial and debated decipherment; the reader is referred to the 'Special number on the Decipherment of the Mohenjodaro Script' of the Journal of Tamil Studies, Vol. II: 1, May 1970.

2. Cf. Emeneau (1954 : p. 287) : "It is not entirely clear evidence for the Dravidian nature of the Harappa language or one of the Harappa languages ; it does, however, lead towards that hypothesis."

3. Cf. B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 100 ff.; Casal 1969 : p. 57 ff.; Dales 1965; Wheeler 1968 : p. 9 ff.; Fairservis 1971 : p. 108ff.,

conclusion that there are significant resemblances. This is fully accepted by Zvelebil (1965 : p. 65). On the other hand, Agrawal (1968 : p. 57) finds that "fifty percent of the graffiti marks [of the chalcolithic cultures of Saurāṣṭra] are completely dissimilar to the Indus symbols. The rest too have no marked similarities. It appears that there was no script being used; probably there was none at this period"

The truth may lie somewhere between these statements. While only a few signs of those analyzed by Lal seem to have some real resemblance to Harappan signs—most of the black-and-red ware graffiti are simple and accidental similarities with any script can be anticipated—the graffiti found a little later in an early chalcolithic post-Harappan context at Rangpur (Rao 1963 : p. 128-133) contain some signs which do suggest genuine reminiscences of the Harappan script. With a view to other evidence which also suggests a continuity of Harappan traditions in the following period such reminiscences are in fact to be expected. But even if the relation of the chalcolithic and megalithic graffiti with the Harappan script is accepted, they are inconclusive as a proof for the Dravidian affinity of the black-and-red ware people: it seems evident that we are here concerned with a fusion of the late Harappan traditions with intrusive traditions coming from the West, where the latter formed the dominant part. In other words : like the mycenean Greeks adopted the minoan script, thus the first Aryans in India adopted the Harappan script; but as they, unlike the Greeks, did not also appropriate the economic system developed by the earlier culture, the script having lost its *raison d'etre*, was confined to owner's marks and the like, and died out. We shall return in a moment to the rather compelling arguments that have been put forward for the Aryan affinity of the newcomers henceforward associated with the chalcolithic black-and-red ware in West and North India.

For these same reasons also Zvelebil's only argument for the Dravidian identity of the black-and-red ware people is inconclusive. It consists of the parallelism between the fact that "this Black-and-Red Ware Folk once inhabited the *whole* of India (including the southern tip, but excluding a part of the Indo-Gangetic plain)" (1965 : p. 65) and "the

presence at some time of *Dravidians* in the whole of the peninsula, that is, also in North–west India" (p. 67).[1]

We have thus finished with the hypotheses of Dravidian and Near Eastern origins of the South Indian megalithic culture and arrived at a negative result.

6. *Evidence for Caucaso-Iranian and Aryan origins*

The South Indian megaliths, particularly the characteristic port-holed cists, have long been compared with their European and Central Asian parallels dating from the third and second millennia B.C. Thus Congrave and Taylor over hundred years ago suggested them to be works of "the great Aryan nomadic tribes of the Eastern Celts or Scythians" (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 229 Ramachandran 1971 : p. 23, 97). Subba Rao (1962 : p. 136) finds an Iranian derivation possible and Banerjee (1962 : p. 180) probable. To B. and R. Allchin, some of the South Indian grave types "are reminiscent of those of Central Asia, Iran or the Caucasus, and could well represent traits brought from those areas by Indo–European speaking immigrants" (1968 : p. 229).

61. An Aryan solution occurred to Banerjee as possible on some grounds, but he refuted it as impossible on the basis of others. The passage is worth citing in extenso: "The revolutionary character of the megalithic culture, seen as a newcomer into a primitive crop farming neolithic society of alleged Dravidian speakers, under the assumed autochthonous theory, would imply, as correctly interpreted by Wheeler, the movement of a fresh impetus into the south. It is clear to see, considering the evidence of history, that such a moving force could indeed have been introduced by the infiltration of the Aryan influence and tribes, but the introduction of megalithism is the last thing that should or could be

1. Zvelebil's "basic presumption identified the makers of this [black-and-red] pottery (in both [earlier painted, i. e. chalcolithic and later plain i. e. megalithic] variants) with the Dravidians" (1965 : p. 67). "It is not possible in my opinion to simply equate the Harappans and the Dravidians . . . I repeat : we do not simply *identify* the Dravidians with the Harappans, but we presume the co-existence of the Harappans and the relatively advanced Dravidian culture of the Black-and-red Ware People . . ." (ibid.).

associated with them, even though the combination of the black-and-red ware pottery, quite at home in the Ganga plain, as recent excavations have shown, could be attributed to such an influence. They could not be the carriers of a death cult which has had no place in their ritual. The megalithic concept is, therefore, elsewhere to seek." (Banerjee 1968 : p. 186 f.) K. V. Soundara Rajan (1969) has arrived at a similar conclusion : " Megaliths in India were seemingly the sociological index of non-Aryan people given to burial, as different from cremation, which was an Aryan trait in India" (Ramachandran 1971 : p. 118).

62. This main argument against an Aryan identification of the first megalithic people in South India is, however, not cogent. In the first place, the megalithic Kurgan or 'barrow' culture of the South Russian and Central Asian steppes is now almost unanimously identified by the archæologists as the proto-Indo-European culture in its earlier phases, and as the proto-Aryan culture in its late phases in the Caucasus region (cf. Childe 1926 : p. 183 ff., 194 f.; Gimbutas 1965 : p. 21 ff., Gimbutas 1970; Goodenough 1970). For the (dubious) toponymic evidence see Eilers and Mayrhofer 1960. Another name for the Kurgan culture is "battle axe" culture, according to the characteristic, apparently ceremonial hammer-shaped weapon, which is also found in the hand of a male divinity, obviously the thunder god, depicted on late Kurgan stone stelae (Gimbutas 1970 : p. 170 ff.).

I should like to draw attention to important linguistic evidence which is of relevance here, but seems not to have been mentioned in this context before. One of the early Aryan loanwords in the Finno-Ugric languages, which must have been borrowed somewhere in the South Russian steppes, is Finnish *vasara* 'hammer', Lappish *vaeccer* 'axe', Mordvinian *vizir*, *uzer* 'axe', corresponding to Sanskrit *vajra* 'thunderbolt, the weapon of the thunder god Indra' and Avestan *vazra* 'club, god Mithra's main weapon (cf. Burrow 1965[2] : p. 24 Collinder 1955 : p. 139). In Finnish folklore the weapon of the thunder god, the bolt, is called "stone axe from the sky", besides *vasara* (Harva 1948 : p. 92). Also in Lithuania the thunder god Perkūnas (identical with the Slavonic god

Perun) was depicted as "holding in one hand an axe or hammer, which he throws at bad people and evil spirits, and which afterwards returns to his hand" (Gimbutas 1971 : p. 165; Harva, l. c.); cf. further the Germanic thunder god Donar–Tor with his 'hammer', etc. In my view this proves beyond doubt that the Aryans originally were carriers of the Kurgan culture, and in our context, that the megalithic burial was originally an Aryan trait.

63. The distance of the Kurgan culture from India in space and time is also narrowed by the megaliths in the Levant : Gimbutas (1970 : p. 186 ff.) considers the megaliths in Syria and Palestine as intrusive and as traces of invasions of Kurgan people. This tallies well with the evidence of the Near Eastern texts, which prove the presence of military nobility with Aryan proper names in Mitanni during the second millennium B.C., and possibly also in Syria and Palestine (cf. Mayrhofer 1966 : p. 29 f.; Kammenhuber 1968 : p. 87 ff.; Rabin 1968 : p. 10).

More important is the necropole B of Sialk VI (ca. 1200–1000 B.C.) in Iran, where "two tombs with undeniable port-hold slabs" (Thapar 1971 : p. vii, citing Childe) offer a good parallel to the South Indian cist graves with portholes. Iron here "vies with bronze in frequency of occurrence. The people who buried their dead in Necropolis B were horsemen: they left paintings of horses and riders on their pottery and on cylinder seals, and in the grave with the dead they buried horse furniture including bits, horse-bells and pectorals. Moreover, they used chariots. They may no doubt be associated in a general way with the horse-centred culture represented by the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age graves of the Caucasus and Luristan, and must therefore indicate movements of turbulent, partly nomadic, peoples, who may be inferred to have been Indo-Iranian speaking" (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 207). We may note the presence of megaliths, horses, and iron, which all belong to the characteristic traits of the Southern megaliths.

64. Banerjee has, in an as yet unpublished paper from 1961 (cf. Banerjee 1962 : p. 180 and Thapar 1971 : p. vii), suggested that the

cairn burials of Baluchistan provide "the necessary link as also the inspiration for the megalithic concept" in India. However this be, the "whole chain of cairn cemeteries" in southern and central Baluchistan belonged to people with "horse riding, the use of iron and handmade pottery" characterized by "the use of bands of continuous spirals as a painted design -- a suggestively Caucasian detail. At present all these sites can only be vaguely dated: it is probable that they cover several centuries, and range from c. 1100 to 750 B.C. or even later" (B. and R. Allchin, 1968 : p. 207 f.).

Some megaliths have been found in North India, too,[1] but with regard to "the huge preponderance of megalithic cists in the South" (Wheeler 1968² : p. 160), they are considered "as outliers both in time and space" (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 223). However, Banerjee (1962 : p. 189) may be right in suggesting that "the struggling presence of megaliths in north India may represent . . . early essays in building such monuments. They are naturally sparse and few in the beginning before they become common." In other words, at least some of the North Indian megaliths might represent the "rudimentary, pioneering steps" which are missing in South India (cf. ibid. p. 186). Such hesitation in the beginning would be natural if the introducers of the megalithic cult and of iron were fusing with "the chalcolithic culture of west and central India in its dying phase" (Banerjee 1962 : p. 180). Such a fusion is indicated by the significant change in the burial customs of the Deccan in the last centuries of the second millennium B.C. noted by the Allchins (cf. above § 12), and appears to me as the only possible explanation for the megalithic black-and-red ware. This postulated fusion would be natural, if the earlier chalcolithic culture was also Aryan speaking. And there is every indication it was.

65. Horse was early domesticated in its native area which coincides with that of the Kurgan culture in the Eurasiatic steppes, and it played a dominant role in the Kurgan culture's economy and religion, as well as in its rapid expansion (Gimbutas 1970). There is much

1. A list of the sites is given by Thapar 1971 : p. II.

reason to consider the speakers of the Indo-Aryan languages as the bringers of both horse and (later) iron to India. The archæological evidence, which includes weapons of Caucasian and Iranian type, suggests several waves of immigrants arriving from Iran to North West India from the beginning to the end of the second millennium B.C. I need not repeat here all this evidenee relating to the Aryan invasions to India, which has been assembled and conveniently presented by B. and R. Allchin (1968 : p. 144 ff., 163 ff., 182 ff., 206 ff, 323 ff.). The convincing picture that is emerging may in a few words be summarized here.

The first waves of the Aryans, coming from the Caucasus through Iran, fused with the descendents of the Harappans to form hybrid cultures in the Punjab (Cemetery H in Harappā), Sind (Jhukar and Jhangar cultures) and southern Rajasthan (Banas culture) in the first quarter of the second millennium B.C. Later intrusions of Caucasian and Iranian elements brought about the cultures of the Malwa plateau and of Jorwe and other sites in Mahārāṣṭra, which also show post-Harappan affinities. This Aryan infiltration brought to the Deccan first copper and bronze[1] and the horse, and, it seems, at the end of the second millennium the megaliths and iron. A most important fact from the point of view of the southern megaliths is that "the black-and-red ware forms a dominant element of the post-Harappan pottery of Ahar and south Rajputana and seems to have spread thence into Malwa and Maharashtra, and then southwards (probably with or before the spread of iron working) to the extreme South. Also from these centres it spread eastwards across Central India and into the Ganges valley" (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 291; cf. also the map with chronology involved in Agrawal 1968 : fig. 10).

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1. "From copper hoards at Fatehgarh and Bithur in Uttar Pradesh, and from a site in the neighbourhood of Kallur in Raichur district, well to the south in the peninsula, have come swords or dirks of copper or bronze with mid-ribs and 'antennae' hilts (Plate 21B), compared by von Heine-Geldern to examples from the Koban culture of the Caucasus and there datable to c. 1200-1000 B.C. A copper spearhead with somewhat similar hilt from Chandoli in maharashtra.. comes from strata dated by radiocarbon to c. 1330 B.C. . . ." (B. and R. Allchin, 1968 : p. 153).

Shortly before the first evidence for iron, ca. 1100 B.C., was introduced an entirely new form of pottery, the so called Painted Grey Ware, which was confined to the Punjab and the Ganges–Yamuna Doab, lasting until about 500 B.C. The geographical and temporal horizons as well as the cultural contents fit exactly the evidence of the early Vedic literature, and there can hardly be doubt that the Painted Grey Ware represents the Vedic Aryans coming as a later wave deep in the middle of earlier Aryan immigrants. Such a deep thrust is paralleled by the Dorian invasion in Greece around the same time.

The Allchins have related the black–and–red ware and the Painted Grey Ware with George A. Grierson's division of the modern Indo–Aryan languages into an outer band possibly representing an earlier layer, and an inner band showing many innovations comprising Hindi and its dialects. Grierson's grouping as such is accepted by the specialists (cf. Fairbanks 1969 : p. 38), but the data which he has used as criteria are rather recent developments (cf. Ibid, and Bloch 1919 : p. 26 ff.). However, there is clear evidence of dialect mixture in the very Ṛgveda (see especially Emeneau 1966; cf. also Gonda 1971 : p. 19 f., p. 43) that seems to indicate the presence in India of earlier arrived Aryans who had already been subject to the substratum influence of the Dravidian languages, which is largely responsible for the later development of the Indo–Aryan.

I would also take the much discussed and very differently interpreted sentence of PB 17, 1, 9 describing the vrātyas to refer to their Prakritic language, with Weber and Horsch (1966 : p. 418 with n. 2, q.v.) : *aduruktavākyam duruktam āhuh* "they say that speech, which is not difficult to pronounce (i.e., Sanskrit), is difficult to pronounce".

An interesting note by the Allchins on the relation between the Painted Gray Ware and the black–and–red ware deserves to be inserted here: "A special feature of both the black–and–red ware of the Early Iron Age and the Painted Grey ware is the predominance of two forms, the shallow tray–bowl and the deeper cup-like bowl. In our view these two must have had some special cultural significance to do with eating habits, and therefore would suggest that a broad cultural unification went

along with the spread of iron. How this can be related to the spread of Indo-Iranian speech or Brahmanical caste and customs, is a fascinating problem which demands attention" (1968 : p. 232). These two distinctive types of pottery, which are included in the South Indian megalithic black-and-red ware (cf. ibid. p. 227), were adopted also by the Northern Black Polished ware that spread all over North India after 500 B.C. with the Magadhan influence (cf. ibid. p. 215). In the central Ganges valley, to the east of the junction of Ganges and Yamuna, "Painted Grey ware is absent, the black-and-red giving way directly to the Northern Black Polished ware around 500 B.C." (p. 213), while "a black-and-red pottery tradition is found beneath the Painted Grey ware in the Doab, though whether associated with iron is not yet clear" (p. 232). The conclusion made by the Allchins seems wholly justified to me: "If, as we have supposed, the Rigveda is to be associated with one of the later waves of Indo-Iranian speaking invaders, then the earlier waves of 'outer band' speakers, already settled in the Punjab and Doab, far from vanishing into the jungles, as Herzfeld suggested, must have been at least in part displaced by their arrival, and would have moved off eastwards. This movement is no doubt represented by the black-and-red ware now coming to light in the Doab and in the Middle Ganges, and there can be no reason to doubt that it was responsible for the arrival in the lower Ganges valley of the ancestors of the Magadhi-Bengali languages of more recent times" (p. 329).

66. We must now examine the modes of burial in India. It is not irrelevant to point out at the outset that the funeral ceremonies (*pitṛmedha*) and the cult of deceased ancestors (*śrāddha* and *Piṇḍapitṛyajña*) formed an important and integral part of the Vedic ritual.

661. The archæological evidence suggests that cremation might have come to be the dominant way of disposing of the dead in North India already in post-Harappan times, for no burials within the settlements any more than in separate burial grounds have been encountered, with the exception of the 'megalithic' graves of the extreme North West (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 316). But this may also be due to the material used for the funeral monuments (cf. below). Although cremation must have been the normal practice in the Ṛgvedic period, there are references

which seem to attest that burial too was practiced. RS. 10, 15, 14 and AS 18, 2, 35 speak of dead who are *agnidagdhāh* 'burnt with (funeral) fire' and *an-agnidagdhāh* 'not burnt with fire' who both enjoy the food of the deceased in the middle of sky. AS 18, 2, 34 clearly speaks of *nikhātāh* 'buried' fathers besides *dagdhāh* 'burnt', *paroptāh* 'scattered away'[1] and *uddhitāh* 'set up'[2]. The expressions *mṛṇmaya gṛha* 'clay house' in RS 7,89,1 and *bhūigmṛha* 'earth house' in AS 5,30,14 as the abode of the dead may refer to the funeral monument to be discussed below; Geldner (a. l.) draws attention to the epithet *adrivah* 'lord of stone' (otherwise used of Indra only) which is used of Varuṇa in the Ṛgvedic stanza. Caland (1896 : p. 166) sees a relic of a pre-Vedic burial funeral in the custom of cutting open the entrails of the deceased and removing the fecal matter: This custom which some authorities mention as facultative and some with disapproval (e.g. ŚB 12, 5, 2. 5 recommends instead simply to wash the body) seems to have no purpose if the body is burnt.

"The placing of collected, disarticulated bones in large urns" appeared as an intrusive new practice, accompanied by pottery with new forms and new painted patterns recalling those of sites in Iran, in the post-Harappan cemetery H at Harappa (B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 313 f.). The normal Harappan practice seems to have been extended inhumation (cf. ibid. p. 138). It is important to note that according to the Vedic practice the body is first burnt, and only after a few days the bones are collected and buried in a second funeral (cf. the detailed description in Caland 1896). This corresponds also with the fractional burial of the South Indian megaliths. In all these cases the flesh is first removed,

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1. This term must refer either to people who have died far off and been left uncared (cf. the gloss of the commentator: *duradese kasthavat parityaktah)* or to people buried through exposure to vultures, jackals, dogs, etc., as was the practice of the Aryans in Iran (cf. Zimmer 1879 : p. 402 and Geiger 1882 : p. 266 f.).

2. This expression probably refers to exposure on trees, cf. Whitney *a. l.* and Keith 1925 : p. 417 f., and the later Indian practice evidenced, e. g., in the Vetalapancavimsati.

apparently because the dead "do not go to the land of souls until they are without flesh" (cf. van Gennep 1960 [1908] : p. 148 f.) : the use of fire, which also had purificatory effect, only accelerates the removal of "the dread substance, which burial could also effect. The idea that burning was necessary to take the soul to heaven is not Vedic: the Rigveda proves that from the earliest recorded period the unburnt went to heaven no less than the burnt" (Keith 1925: p. 417).

In the probably proto-Aryan Kuban culture of North Caucasus (cf. above p. 27) the dead were apparently not burnt but placed, possibly in a sitting position, in the megalithic 'dolmens'; exact details are not avilable in spite of the great number of the dolmens (cf. Tallgren 1934 : p. 16, where mention is made of some 700 dolmens). It is, however, possible that dolmens have been used in the Caucasus region as ossuaries where skeletons have been placed after excarnation in trees or through exposure to animals feeding on carrions (cf. Tallgren 1934 : p. 39 f., where the possible connection with the Zoroastrian practice is also referred to). Grave goods, both vessels and weapons, are found in the dolmens of Kuban; indeed, the weapons are rather conspicuous like in the South Indian megaliths (cf. Tallgren 1934; Phillips 1961 : p. 320 f.; Gimbutas 1965 : p. 479–527). Also in the Vedic ritual the dead man's "weapon" (staff for a brāhmaṇa, bow for a ksatriya, and goad for a vaiśya ; and the sacrificial implements for an āhitāgni) followed him to the funeral pyre (cf. Caland 1896 : p. 45 ff., 167).

662. R. C. Gaur (1969) has already, in connection with the South Indian megaliths, referred to the description of a funeral monument to be erected for the dead, which is found in the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa (13,8), a Vedic text of approimxately 700 B.C. The text expressly mentions a "burial place (*śmaśāna*) . . . (to serve the dead) either as a house or as a monument" (ŚB 13,8,1,1). "Four-cornered (is the sepulchral mound). Now the gods and the asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, were contending in the (four) regions (quarters). The gods drove out the asuras, their rivals and enemies, from the regions, and, being regionless, they were overcome. Wherefore the people who are godly make their burial-places four-cornered, whilst those who are of the Asura nature, the Easterners and

others, (make them) round, for they (the gods) drove them out from the regions. . . ." (SB 13, 8, 1, 5: Eggeling's translation). From the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa and the later ritual texts (cf. Caland 1896 : p. 129 ff.; Kane 1953 : IV p. 246 ff.) it appears that such *śmaśānaciti* or *loṣṭaciti* was in the first place reserved for the comparatively few persons who had performed the *agnicayana*, that is, built an *agniciti* or fire altar as their second body. The building material, clods or lumps of earth (*loṣṭa*) or clay bricks, may also account for the scarcity of archæological remains of such monuments. The mounds found by T. Bloch at Lauriya, Nandangarh, in Bengal (cf. Bloch 1905 and 1906) are probably agnicitis rather than śmaśānacitis (cf. Caland 1912), but of particular interest is their round form, which according to Caland (1912 : p. 380 n. 1) is not prescribed by the Śulbasūtras for a śmaśānaciti, though Kauśikasūtra 85, 8 shows that also round śmaśānas existed; but the above description of the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa specificly says that the "Easterners" made round śmaśānas'. Round agnicayanas also exist, but the normal form prescribed in the Vedic texts is that of a falcon, and the latter is confirmed for the Vedic area proper by the excavations of Kauśāmbī (cf. Weber 1873 : p. 264 and IAR 1957–58 : p. 48 ff.). There can be no doubt that the Easterners (*prācyāh*), whom the Vedic Aryans here specify as their rivals and enemies that they have driven away from their habitats, are the inhabitants of Magadha, whom Megasthenes calls *Prasioi* = Skt. *prācyāh* (cf. e.g. Macdonell and Keith 1912 : II p. 46 and Stein 1932 : p. 291).

663. The South Indian megaliths have also been connected with, or derived from, the stūpas (Kearns 1859, Banerjee 1956 and Gaur 1969). On the other, the stūpas, which were built for the relics of the Buddha and revered Buddhist monks, but also of Jaina and Hindu ascetics,[1] have

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1. It may be noted here that according to the late Vedic texts the ascetics (*parivrajaka, yati, samnyasin*) -- who hardly are mentioned in the Vedic texts before the Upanisads (cf. Macdonell and Keith 1912, s.v. *parivrajaka, tapasa, sramana*) -- are never burnt but buried with their staff, bowl etc., with special care taken against later disturbance of the grave by jackals, dogs and vultures. This agrees with other sources and later practice according to which the ascetices are always buried, in a sitting position in a pit which is filled with salt and mustard seeds up to the

been considered to have grave tumuli or specificly the megaliths as their prototype (cf. Bidie 1887 and Ghurye 1926 Basham 1954 : p. 262; Bareau 1964 : p. 66). The stūpa, as the container of the magic power inherent in the relics of the holy men, is also derived from the pre-Buddhist popular cult of *caityas.* "These were often small groves of trees, or a single sacred tree, on the outskirts of villages, and might also include tumuli, such as those in which the ashes of chiefs were buried. These caityas were the abodes of earth-spirits and genii, who, to the simpler folk, were more accessible and less expensive to worship than the great gods of the Āryans. The Jaina scriptures show that unorthodox holy-men often made their homes in or near the caityas . . . and the Buddha is said to have respected these local shrines, and to have encouraged his lay followers to revere them" (Basham 1954 : p. 262; cf. also Bareau *l.c.*). The term *caitya* (Pāli *cetiya*) is in all probability derived from *citi* which denotes the Vedic fire altar and funeral monument (cf. Ramachandra Dikshitar 1938). Mus (1935) and Kramrisch (1946) have clearly shown that both the Buddhist stūpa and the Hindu temple share the cosmic symbolism first evidenced in the texts for the Vedic fire altar.

In a forthcoming publication I am endeavouring to prove that the agnicayana rite is a survival of the Harappan ideology, preserved to the historical times (i.e., to the Vedic texts) through the intermediation of the pre-Vedic Aryans whose traditions the vrātyas are perpetuating. In the present context I am only concerned with making the point that the fire altar rite is indeed connected with the vrātyas, whose supreme god was, as will be argued below, Rudra. That the agnicayana is not of Vedic Aryan origin should be clear from the absence in the Ṛgveda (excepting the late books) of references to this archaic rite that in the Brāhmaṇa period has

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ascetic's neck, whereafter his skull is completely broken by throwing coconuts on it. (Cf. Caland 1896 : p. 93 ff.) Ramachandran's bibliography records a South Indian megalith with beheaded corpses (p. 98) and another with two urns containing "the entire human skeleton in a squatting position holding a short bladed sword in one arm while the other rested on the thigh" (p. 88). Tridents such as those found in the megaliths (cf. above, § I.C.) are carried by Saiva mendicants.

assumed such a paramount importance in the religion. Indeed, as Eggeling (1897 : IV p. xiii) has pointed out, the agnicayana ritual "does not seem to have formed part of the original sacrifical system, but was probably developed independently of it, and incorporated with it at a comparatively recent period". Rudra, as the flaming Fire, plays a central role in the agnicayana ritual as the god to whom the completed altar is consecrated by means of the śatarudrīyahoma (Weber 1873 : p. 270 f.). It is on this occasion that the śatarudrīya litany, perhaps the most important Vedic text that we possess regarding Rudra, is ritually used. The association of the agnicayana ritual with the vrātyas is also underlined by its special connection with the mahāvrata which has been emphasized by Eggeling (1897 : IV p. xxv f.); and the mahāvrata can be proved to be of vrātya origin (cf. below, p. 34). The point which I am trying to make is that the caityas or stūpas and the śmaśānaciti, at least partly (with regard to the Eastern India we also have to account with other traditions), seem to represent a fusion of the fire altar ritual, which is of pre-Vedic and ultimately of pre-Aryan origin, and the Aryan megalithism. In South India the latter component is obviously in the foreground, as is quite natural under the assumption that this flow of the Aryans to South India is due to fresh Aryan impulses coming from outside India and bringing exactly this Aryan trait, together with iron, to the pre-existing Aryan culture of India.

III. The vratyas and their cult of Death

In the above quoted passage of the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, describing the funeral monument, reference was made to people of *āsura* (demoniac) nature, among whom the Magadhans hold the pride of place, and whom the *daiva* people, i.e., Vedic Aryans, have driven out from the "regions" (i.e., obviously, their earlier habitat occupied by the Aryans). This passage, as well as some others to be quoted below where a death cult of the āsura people is specificly mentioned, is of the greatest interest to our theory of an Aryan origin of the megalithic culture. This reference seems to reflect the historical displacement of the black-and-red ware people by the painted grey ware people in the Madhyadeśa region, and the continuation of their culture in Magadha, (cf. above, p. 33).

7. *Previous and present study of the vrātyas :*

In his important study of the vrātyas (1962), in which he showed that the vrātyas were Aryans and that their rites represent an older form from which the 'classical' Vedic ritual has developed, Heesterman concludes: "The vrātyas are authentic Vedic Aryans... This is not to exclude the possibility of drawing lines connecting them with later developments, such as yoga and Śaivism. But once it is recognized that the vrātyas' relation to brahmanical ritual is not one of antithesis but of precedence in development, these connections lose most of their urgency for the explanation of the vrātyas identity" (p. 36). This remark with its slight belittlement of the earlier interpretations has already occasioned at least one statement according to which Heesterman's theory rules out the earlier ones. According to Hauer (1927), who developed Charpentier's idea that the vrātyas were devotees of Rudra-Śiva (1909), the vrātyas stand for the representatives of the (from the Vedic point of view) 'heretic' religions, above all the predecessors of the historical Śaivism and the religions arising in Magadha (notably Buddhism and Jainism). In my view, Hauer's conclusion is equally right and

important as that of Heesterman. The two theories fuse together if we instead of taking the vrātyas for early Vedic Aryans (Heesterman) consider them as the common predecessors in India of both the Vedic Aryans and the āsura people surrounding them, namely, the pre-Vedic Aryans represented by the black–and–red ware, whose 'pre–classical' rites (underivable from the old Ṛgveda) were taken over, but only with considerable modifications, by the Vedic Aryans. To back up this theory, which, if it can be proved to be correct, greatly modifies our conception of the Indian protohistory, I have considered it necessary once again to underline the intimate relation between the vrātyas and Magadha, as well as their close relation with later Buddhism and Jainism, and, last but not least, Saivism.

Heesterman has in another publication (1964 : p. 27 ff.) argued that the religious mendicant represents a development caused by the change of the dualistic and cyclical 'pre-classical' ritual into a self-sufficient and one–directional one, that of the 'classical' ritual. The religious mendicant is, however, already early one of the characteristic differences of the 'heretic' religions from the Vedic 'orthodoxy'; in the following study I am putting forward grounds which in my opinion justify the conclusion that already the Vedic descriptions of the vrātyas (who represent the 'pre–classical' stage) comprise descriptions of parivrājakas.

Not only with regard to the South Indian megaliths, but the history of Indian religions in general, the special connection of the vrātya with Rudra seems to be of the greatest importance. This connection has not been properly emphasized by Heesterman, as it was by Hauer, and I am accordingly underlining the close parallelism of the descriptions of the vrātyas and the descriptions of Rudra (this thesis of Hauer has been developed below) and the expressly stated identifications of Rudra as the god par excellence of the vrātyas.

Heesterman has in several studies convincingly shown that the 'pre-classical' ritual was dualistic and cyclical, and that the concept of impurity and death played an important role in it; and further, that this essential component was practically eliminated from the 'classical'

ritual at its canonization. Below, I have endeavoured to show that it is exactly this side of the pre-classical, i.e., pre-Vedic, religion largely eliminated by the Vedic Aryans that Rudra stands for and represents. He is, as is well known, "excluded" from the 'classical', i.e., Vedic, ritual. There is clear evidence, I think, which proves Rudra to be the ambivalent god of Death, Mṛtyu, simultaneously causing death and recreation. Killing and orgiastic sexual rites would therefore naturally form the most important components of Rudra's cult, as they indeed do.

It is interesting to note, by the way, how these archaic rites, some remnants of which admitted (though not without objections) to the 'classical' Vedic ritual we shall have occasion to consider in some detail, are, with the development of moral concepts, in a quite parallel way discarded also in Magadha. Rudra = Mṛtyu is decidedly identical with Māra 'Death', the Evil of Buddhism, who is also reduced to a quite subordinate role; but it is characteristic that when we do hear of him, notably in connection with the Buddha's enlightenment, he is the lord of the most terrible hosts of demons, but also of women of the most enchanting beauty, by means of whom he tries to lead the Buddha to temptation. (The same is done by Mṛtyu to Naciketas in the Kaṭha Upanisad.) The identity of Māra with the Hindu gods Kāma and Yama–Mṛtyu, established by Windisch, was critisized by Charpentier (1909 : p. 169 ff.), who argued that Māra is Rudra–Śiva. In my view both are equally right : the Great God (Mahādeva) has many names and aspects. He is also the later Gaṇeśa or Gaṇapati, both as the 'leader of hosts' and as the elephant god (the rutting elephant being a symbol of lust and fertility) and Skanda, who also is the 'leader of armies' (Māra and Mṛtyu have also senās) and, like Rudra, a warrior, i.e., killer.[1]

1. cf. Gonda 1960 : I p. 261 f.

The connection of the vrātyas and of Rudra with the death cult is of the greatest consequence for the theory of an Aryan origin of the South Indian megaliths that I am here advancing. Megalithic Rudra-cult would also seem to provide an excellent explanation to the origin of the South Indian Aiyanar cult ; but this we shall consider later.

Before turning to the descriptions of the vrātyas I should like to add the remark that the vrātyas, as worshippers of Rudra, must not be identified with the pre-Vedic Aryans as a whole. Their religion certainly comprised also the worship of the god of life, as also Heesterman is suggesting with his dualistic ritual, and as such we undoubtedly have to consider Viṣṇu|Prajāpati, who also in the agnicayana has an equally important role as Rudra. It is telling that these great gods of the later times (i.e., after the fusion of the Vedic and pre-Vedic Aryans in India) occupy a very subordinate position in the old parts of the Ṛgveda representing the unmixed traditions of the Vedic Aryans.

8. *The descriptions of the vrātyas*

The principal sources on the vrātyas are 1) the vrātya-book (XV) of the Atharvavedasamhitā, 2) the descriptions of the vrātyastomas (sacrifices of purification to be performed by the vrātya in order to be accepted to the Aryan society) in the Brāhmaṇas of the Sāmaveda and the Śrautasūtras, 3) descriptions of the vrātīnas employed as priests at incantation rites, in the Ṣaḍvimśabrāhmaṇa and the Śrautasūtras, and 4) some other texts, notably a passage of the Mahābhārata (8, 44, 1-8, 45, 48). On the basis of these sources, which have been dealt with extensively by Hauer (1927) to whom the reader is referred for detailed references, it is possible to add especially the Śatarudriya litany and the description of the mahāvratas as referring to the vrātyas Further, their connection with the proto-Epic gāthās and ślokas, established by Horsch (1966), is of immense consequences but must be more extensively dealt with in another publication, as well as their relation with the Atharvaveda. Megasthenes is also relevant.

The vrātya book of the AS and the texts on the vrātyastomas represent the vrātyas as more or less constantly moving around to all

directions, in groups or bands (*vrāta*, *pūga*, or *gaṇa*) with the leadership of a *sthapati* or *gṛhapati*. It seems practical to deal first with the equipment of this leader and the other vrātyas described in considerable detail in these texts before discussing more closely the vrātya way of life.

81. As noted already, the vrātya leader (chosen on the basis of his fame, learnednes and riches) apparently represents the divine *gaṇapati* or *vrātapati* (cf. the Śatarudriya litany), Rudra. The first hymns of AS 15 call the Sole, Primeval vrātya (*ekavrātya*) expressly Rudra, mentioning also his other names: Īśvara, Mahādeva, Paśupati, Bhava, Śarva and Ugradeva. Also the equipment of the vrātya chief obviously imitates that of Rudra:

——— He has long hair (AS 15,2 *keśāh*); cf. also the vrātya affinity of the persons called Keśin (Keśin Dārbhya, etc). suggested by Heesterman (1962 : p. 16). In the Śatarudrīya litany (TS 4, 5, 2, 1 e) Rudra is called *harikeśa*; the long-haired (*keśin*) muni in RS 10,136 has tasted of Rudra's cup of poison (drugs).

——— He wears a turban (*uṣṇīṣa*: AS 15,2; PB 17,1,4), which according to BaudhŚS 18,25 is black. In the Śatarudriya Rudra is called "the turbaned wanderer of mountains;' (TS 4,5,3 h).

——— He has a dark garment (AS 15,2 *vāsas*). The attribute *kṛṣṇaśam* in PB is variously explained by the exegetes quoted in LSS 8,6,12–14: according to Dhanamjayya the word means 'black', according to Gautama 'white with black fringes', according to Śāṇḍilya 'black and white mixed' (KŚS which clearly knows LŚS says 'dark brown' or 'not black but with black fringes'). Baudhāyana, generally a most reliable source, definitely says "black with black fringes" (18,24), and later (18,25) that the cloth is of wool. In the Aitareyabrāhmaṇa (5,14) Rudra is spoken of as "a man in black garments coming from the north".

——— He has an upper garment of white and black goat skins (PB *kṛṣṇabalakṣe ajine*, glossed by LSS with the word *avikau*). In the Śatarudriya, Rudra is called *kṛttivāsas* (VS 3,61). From ŚB 13,2,2,7, describing the horse sacrifice, an archaic rite of demonstrably pre-Vedic

origin (cf. below), it appears that an old-fashioned suit of armour is meant "A white (he-goat) and a black (he-goat), for Sūrya and Yama, on the flanks: a suit of armour he makes these two; whence the king, clad in mail, performs heroic deeds".

——— He wears a jewel (*maṇi*: AS 15,2 only).

——— He wears neck-ornaments, two according to AS 15,2 (*pravartau*) and Baudh ŚS 18,24, the latter text defining them to be of gold and silver (*suvarṇarajatau rukmau*), while PB 17,1,14 speaks of one silvery neck-plate only (*rajata niska*). The golden neck-ornament plays, as symbol of "fire, light (or: seed) and immortality", an important role also in the aśvamedha, which as already noted, certainly is a vrātya sacrifice: cf. ŚB 13,4,1,7-11. The *niska* also appears in a clearly vrātya context in RS 1,126,2, which forms part of the nārāśamsāni of the purusamedha (cf. ŚŚS 16,11,4-6 and Weber 1891 : p. 775 ff.); on the vrātya affinity of the nārāśamsāni, see Horsch 1966 : p. 411 ff.; the purusamedha, on the other hand, is probably very close to the pre-Aryan prototype of the aśvamedha. Rudra is directly said to carry a neck-ornament (*niska*) in the Rudra-hymn RS 2,33,10: *arhan bibharsi . . . niskam yajatam viśvarūpam.*

This Ṛk-verse addressed to Rudra is addressed to the mahāvīra pot in the pravargya ritual, and the pot is also directly called Rudra; besides, the two neck ornaments, one of gold and another of silver, correspond with the golden and silvery plates which in the pravargya are placed above and below the mahāvīra pot (see Hauer 1927 : p. 129 f.). Rudra is imagined as a leader of a band of warriors, and the title "great hero" fits well this image. Rudra's identity with the pravargya pot, and his affinity with the vrātyas make it tempting to see the original mahāvīra pot in the black-and-red ware vessels, which through their very colour are apt to represent Rudra. The above cites black garments (turban, cloth etc.,) used by the vrātyapati show that Rudra was associated with black, the colour of death (see also Arbman 1922 : p. 46 f. for further references), while his name *Rudra* etymologically means 'red', and is of the same derivation as *rudhira* 'blood' (both from * *rudhra*, cf. Greek 'red', etc.). That this derivation, in spite of the

doubts expressed (cf. Mayrhofer 1956- s.v.) is correct, is confirmed by the very many and varied expressions referring to Rudra's reddish-brown colour (the colour of blood, and of fire) in the Vedic texts (see Arbman 1922 : p. 9, 21, 46 f.; Bhattacharji 1970 : p. 140). The association of the black-and-red ware with Rudra is strengthened also by the graffiti on it, which very often show the bow, Rudra's characteristic weapon that we shall discuss in a moment. The black-and-red ware, in its turn, seems to perpetuate Harappan traditions, in respect of the colours at least, for the Harappan "painted pottery is characteristically black on red background" (Fairservis 1971 : p, 287; cf. also B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 300). Detailed comparisons of the Vedic pravargya and other vessels with the archæological material are now made possible by the accurate analysis by Rau (1972) of the Vedic sources describing their fabrication; cf. also Kashikar (1969).

The colour and function may also ritually link another megalithic trait with Rudra : the weapons, used for killing, are made of iron, a black metal which similtaneously may also be called "red", as it is in Sanskrit (*lohita*), on account of the rust. It has already been argued above, and more proofs will follow, that Rudra is identical with Mṛtyu, Death. In the classical Hindu mythology the god of Death (Yama) has the buffalo for his vehicle, and attention has already been drawn above to the fact that one of the iron tridents found in the South Indian megalithic caves had an iron figure of buffalo attached to it; cf. also the buffalo horns of the Harappan "proto-Śiva"

——— The vrātya chief also possesses a 'rough chariot' drawn by two animals — such as are used by the Magadhans (*prācya*) according to Lāṭyāyana —[1] and a goad (*pratoda*); AS 15, 2 also makes mention

1. AS 15,2 speaks of *vipatha* and *vipathavahau* (APSS *ratha vipatha*), PB of *vipatha phalakastirna*, which is glossed in LSS 8, 6, 9 *pracyaratha nastirna*, drawn according to Latyayana's authorities either by a horse and a mule which go differently, or by two horses or two mules; Baudh SS 18,24 speaks of an 'old chariot yoked with two old animals' (*jaratkadratha jaratprayogyabhyam yukta*), while in ib. 25 it is clear that a good war chariot is meant. It seems evident to me from the description of the late mentioned passage that the regular vratya chariot was a

of two *pariskandau* 'footmen going aside the chariot', a *sārathi* 'charioteer', and two *purahsarau* 'forerunners'; and in BaudhŚS 18,24 the war-chariot occupies a central role in the vrātya ritual. In the śatarudriya litany Rudra is called *gartasad* 'mounted on the chariot seat' (TS 4,5,10 h) *āśuratha* 'having a swift chariot' and āśusena 'having a swift army' (TS 5,5,6,2 1).

——— The most characteristic weapon of Rudra, his bow, the string of which he in the śatarudriya litany is repeatedly asked to loosen, is also mentioned as the vrātya chief's possession in the texts (excepting the AS): it is called *jyāhṇoda* in the PB (*jyāhroḍa* in KŚS); which Lāṭyāyana explains by the phrase *dhanuskenānisuṇā vrātyāh prasedhamānā yanti*, and Kātyāyana with *ayogyam dhanuh*; Śāṅkhāyana speaks of *sesudhanvan*, and Baudhāyana of *carmamayair bāṇavadbhis tisṛdhanvam* (18,24). This "weapon" apparently corresponds with the *daṇḍa* 'stock' with which the vrātyas are said to beat those who should not be beaten in PB 17 1, 9 and the *daṇḍa* of the Vedic dīksita with which the *tisṛdhanva* is equated in BaudhŚS 18,25. AS 15,1 mentions the rainbow as the weapon of the Ekavrātya (Īśāna or Mahādeva); because it has no string, the rainbow is in ancient Tamil texts called *kuṛai vil* 'imperfect bow' (Subrahmanian (1966 s.v.). It is interesting to note that in Manu (1,38) and Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa (48,35) we find the expression *rohitendradhanūmsi*: according to Varāhamihira (Bṛhatsamhitā 47,20 and 48,35) and the lexicographers *rohita* is a special imperfect form of the rainbow, unbent and invisible to mortals: in Kannaḍa and Telugu the word *koraḍu* means "a kind of rainbow appearing in a straight form, a red streak in the clouds, a gleam or streak of a rainbow in the clouds" (DED 1766). Mayrhofer (1956 ff: s. v.) connects the name of Rudra's weapon, *pinākam*, which occurs from theA tharvasamhitā onwards, etymologically with Greek 'plank,

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normal war chariot; the *vipatha* 'fit for untrodden or bad paths' (thus MW), which is 'covered with planks only', and is old, drawn by old animals etc., may be a ritual chariot. I am in the first place thinking of the funeral chariot; cf. below on the vratinas.

writing plate, etc.', though not without hesitation. However, if Rudra's weapon or club is a straight rainbow, a derivation from *(a)pi* 'upon' and *nākāh* 'sky' would seem very natural to me.

The connection of *three* arrows with Rudra's bow is striking, cf. *tisṛdhanva* in Baudhāyana above, and e.g. such a passage as TS 5, 5, 7, 2: "The fire is Rudra, his are three missiles (*tisra śaravyāh*), one that comes straight on, one that strikes transversely, and one that follows up. To them he is cut off who piles the fire-altar; . . . he should give (a bow) with three arrows (*tisṛdhanvam*) to a Brahman." That this has special relevance also for the vrātya ritual is in my view shown by the fact that at the *mahāvrata* (on which see below) a kṣatriya shoots *three* arrows in the target-hide (ŚŚS 17, 5, 1ff., etc.). *Aśani* 'thunderbolt' is mentioned as one of Rudra's eight names in KB 6, 1–9, and it is several times mentioned as his weapon in other Vedic texts (cf. Arbman 1922: p. 8, 11 ff.); the connection of the bolt as an arrow and the rainbow as the bow is of course natural. In this context it is interesting to read in TS 6. 1, 3, 4–5 that "Indra hurled his thunderbolt agaist Vṛtra; it divided into three parts (*sa tredhā vy abhavat*) . . . the internal arrows (*antahśarāh*) which were split (*aśīryanta*) became *śara* grass [reed, used for arrows] . . . the thunderbolt is *śara* grass." Keith (a.l.) comments: "the bolt is conceived, it seems, as containing arrows within it". In fact, "the lightning travels along thin channels, usually branced, hence the name forked-lightning" (Forsdyke 1962: p. 66.) I have discussed the three arrows of Rudra's bolt rather extensively, because they seem to me to be expressed in the ritual tridents, which have also been recovered in several of the South Indian megaliths. The Tibetan iconographical representation of *vajra* looks very much like Śiva's *triśūla*; cf. also *trivṛd vajra* in JB 1,247. I should also like to suggest that in the name *try-amba-ka,* which belongs to Rudra and occurs already in the Ṛgveda, the word *amba* is derived not only from Dravidian *amba* 'mother', as has so far been thought (cf. below on the aśvamedha for the three 'mothers'), but also from Dravidian *ambu* 'arrow' (DED 150): the word would in meaning correspond to *tisṛdhanva.* Note that the *three* stars of Orion's belt form the *isu tribāṇda,* the *three-pointed arrow,* with which *Rudra* pierced Prajāpati who approached his own daughter, the star Rohiṇī (AB 3,33).

We have already above noted that according to the original Aryan concept the thunderbolt is a hammer-shaped battle–axe, such as it is depicted also in the Gandhāra art. The *tisṛdhanva* or trident concept on the other hand seems to be derived from the Dravidians of the Harappan civilization, for the sign Y of the Harappan script in all probability stands for the word *taṇṭam* > Skt. *daṇḍa* 'staff', the symbol of the royal power of punishment (cf. Further Progress 1970 p. 30 ff.). In the Vedic ritual the *daṇḍa* of the dīksita, with which the *tisṛdhanva* of the vrātyas is compared by Baudhāyana, is said to be a thunderbolt (ŚB 3,1,1,32), and PB 22,14,3 equals (with *vā*) the expressions *isuhata* 'hit with an arrow' and *daṇḍahata* 'hit with a stick'.

82. The dress of the other vrātyas is described in the PB and the LŚS as woollen cloths with bandfringes that are red at the end,[1] each vrātya having also a pair of 'girdles' (*dāmanī*) and sandals (*upānahau* PB, *upānah* Baudh ŚS), which the exegetes in LŚS explain to be black and have 'ears'. They also have the goat–skin upper garment (mail) made of two pieces (*dvisamhitāny ajināni*) apparently similar to that of their gṛhapati.

83. The description of the vrātyas is complemented by that of the undoubtedly related vrātīnas, employed by the Vedic Aryans as priests in rites of black magic called by such names as *śyena* 'falcon' (cf. agnicayana!), *isu* 'arrow' and *vajra* 'thunderbolt' (cf. above), etc. [2] The vrātīnas are girded with swords (asibaddhāh), have quivers filled with arrows (*upotaparusāh*), and bows with its string loosened[3] or stretched[4]; they use reeds (serving as arrow shafts) for the sacrificial straw, etc. The vrātīnas wear red turbans (*lohitosṇīsāh*) and red cloths (*lohitavāsasah*): red is the colour of blood and of Rudra as the god of witchcraft, to whom a red cow is sacrificed in the śyena.[5] Their sacred thread is hung down in the nivīta mode which is used

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1. *valukantani damatusani* PB, *avikani lohitapravanani vasanani* LSS 8,6,20.
2. The principal texts are SB 3,8; LSS 8,5; SSS 14,22; KSS 22,3.
3. *ujjyadhanvanah* LSS and KSS: cf. BAU 3,8,2 *ujjyam dhanur adhijyam krtva.*
4. *adhijyadhanvanah* SSS.
5. Cf. also TS 2,1,7: "He who practices witchcraft should offer a red [cow] to Rudra; verily he has recourse to Rudra with his own share ... swiftly he reaches destruction; it is red, for it has Rudra as its deity ...": also in TS 2,2,2 Rudra is the god of witchcraft.

(cf. Kane 1941: II, 1 p. 288) especially when answering the calls of nature or carrying a corpse. The boards for the soma pressing are taken from the wheels of a cart used for taking the corpse to the funeral[1]: according to the Vedic texts, the dead body is taken to the funeral with a wagon (*śakaṭam* or *anah*), which according to the Śāṭyāyanabrāhmaṇa (quoted by Hiraṇyakeśin) should be yoked with two black oxen (Caland 1896: p. 20). The term *śakaṭa* (instead of *ratha*), its yoking with oxen, and particularly the use of wheel planks as boards for soma pressing suggest that a traditional, pre-Aryan cart of India (on which see Mackay 1929) was used: it is probably this same cart that is meant by the *vipatha* of the vrātyas which is like the cart of the Easterners according to Lāṭyāyana. Very interesting is the next following prescription found only in Śāṅkhāyana (14,22,19) that "they mix the vasatīvarī water with water that has flown together in the two *camū* of a corpse". This again conneets the vrātīnas with the non-Vedic Aryans and their different burial practices; in describing the sepulchral monument, the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa says: "... Those who are godly people make their sepulchres so as not to be separate (from the earth), whilst those (people) who are of the Asura nature, the Easterners and others, (make their sepulchral mounds) so as to be separated (from the earth), either on a basin (*camū*) or on some such thing" (ŚB 13,8,2,1). Eggeling, commenting on this translation of his, says: "I take the '*camū*' to be a shallow stone basin or trough, either solid or consisting of masonry [bricks] in the manner of our stone-lined graves." Caland, in his above cited translation of ŚŚS 14,22,19, leaves *camū* untranslated, but refers to Oldenberg's discussion of the word (Oldenberg 1908), from which it appears that in the Ṛksamhitā *camū* denotes the two wooden vessels into which soma came after its purification, corresponding to the *pūtabhṛt* and *ādhavanīya* vessels of the later ritual which however are earthen. Since according to the Vedic texts the bones are scattered from the ashpot on the middle of the śmaśāna upon darbha grass and the pot is thereafter broken (Caland 1896: p. 153 ff.), it would seem to me that the *camū* here refers to the burial urns or sarcophagi in which the bones are often placed in the megalithic graves.

1. SB *savanabhye adhisavane ; yena yanena mṛtam nirhareyus tasya nabhye adhisavanapyalake kuryuh* LSS 8,5,6.

Already the Ṛksamhitā (1, 133) refers to terrible and powerful sorcerers frequenting what may be a cemetery or comparable deserted place (*vailasthāna*) and ruins (*armaka*), whom Indra that they do not worship is asked to smash. In later literature Śiva and his host are described as frequenting the cremation and burial grounds, devouring flesh, sucking blood, rejoicing and singing (Bhattacharji 1970 : p. 118 f., 133, 138). The battle-ground with its dead bodies is Śiva's play-ground (Hopkins 1915 : p. 221). Arbman (1922 : p. 254 ff.) is certainly right in connecting the dread dark *gaṇa* of Rudra with the vultures, jackals, dogs and other blood-stained beasts eating corpses, which are mentioned together with Rudra's names Bhava and Śarva in AS 11,2,2.[1]

84. As the god of death and recreation Rudra has an ambivalent nature, and the same applies to his gaṇas: they are not only terrible demons of death but also Phallic demigods of fertility, like the yaksas of Śiva's gaṇas in later times (cf. Charpentier 1909: p. 151, 168). Music and dance, intoxication and orgiastic rites are intimately associated with the cult of Rudra-Śiva (see Bhattacharji 1970 : p. 144, 156). That the same applies to the vrātyas will be clear from the following. As the subject of the paper, however, is the origin of the South Indian megaliths, I am restricting myself to the minimum while dealing with this important aspect of the Rudra cult of the vrātyas; but I hope to return to it soon in another paper. For the present purpose it will be sufficient to establish the nature of the vrātyas, and to show that this side of the vrātya cult provides important proof for Rudra's identity with Mṛtyu, as well as for the association of the funeral monument ritual with the vrātyas.

The Vedic descriptions of the vrātyas, including AS 15,2, specify that they are accompanied by a sacred prostitute (*pūmścalī*), and a *māgadha*. The last mentioned term is glossed by Lāṭyāyana (8,6,28, and

1. Charpentier (1909 p. 157 f) sees vratyas in the people called *Padaioi*, who according to Herodotos (3,99), in all probability quoting Skylax (ca. 510 B.C.), live in the eastern part of India as nomads and eat up their sick; besides, as the other Indians, they copulate openly (3,101).

KŚS 22,4,22 copying him) with *brahmabandhu māgadhadeśīya*. *Brahma-bandhu* denotes a 'sacred' person of the non-Vedic Aryans (cf. Macdonell and Keith 1912 : II p. 116), more particularly the counterpart of the Aryan *brahmacārī*. *Māgadhadeśīya* would seem to mean "coming from the country (*deśa*) of Magadha", although Agnisvāmin's different explanation, which I have earlier taken as proof for his own Magadhan origin, is possible (see Parpola 1968–; I, 1). In later texts *māgadha* means '(wandering) bard', and indeed there seems to be all reason to take it in this meaning also here (see Horsch 1966 : p. 424 ff., and Rolland's forthcoming paper on the mahāvrata, where he rightly draws attention to the parallelism between the mahāvrata and the marriage ritual, where māgadha also appears reciting the formalæ of benediction; cf. also *sūta* 'court bard' in the Śatarudriya litany, TS 4,5,2 h). Though the name *māgadha* refers to Magadha as the country par excellence of the bards, they must have been travelling widely everywhere in India (in fact, the term māgadha would make no sense in Magadha itself.'; cf. Horsch, l.c.). The sacred character of the two is very clear from Baudhāyana's description : *brahmabandhur apuṁścalū puṁścalūvākya*, and *brahmabandhur amāgadha māgadhavākya.*

9. *The vrātya rites :*

91. There can hardly be any doubt that it is these very persons accompanying the vrātyas who are meant, when it is prescribed in the Vedic texts that at the mahāvrata a māgadha and a prostitute (*puṁścalī*) have sexual intercourse. This, as well as other archaic and 'popular' elements of this rite stay in marked contrast to the usually rather monotonous Vedic rituals where the liturgy and its arrangement is the main thing. Indeed, Śāṅkhāyana in his description objects to the performance of the coition, saying that this is ancient, discontinued act (17,6,2 *tad etad purāṇam utsannam na kāryam*). As even the name of the rite (*vrata*) seems to point to this direction, there is thus every reason to consider the long ago accepted theory as correct, that here is a piece of the genuine vrātya rites preserved to us.

The mahāvrata has already been studied by many scholars, the most recent contribution by Rolland (1973) giving a good survey of it. As

I am moreover planning to go deeper into it in another context, I am here only enumerating some elements of it which are of importance for the present study.

The seat (*āsandī*) of udumbara wood, upon which the Udgātar priest sits while singing the main portion of the mahāvrata laud, is, as pointed out by Hauer (1927 : p. 249 f.) of similar description as the *āsandī* of the Ekavrātya in AS 15,3; it plays an important role also in the pravargya and a number of other rites which seem to be of vrātya origin (cf, Rau 1957 : p. 125 with n. 1 and 2). In the funeral ceremonies the dead dīksita is placed on a seat of udumbara wood (Caland 1896 : § 7 and n. 68). The udumbara wood symbolizes food as the texts underline, and this is in accordance with the prescriptions that plenty of food should be served on the mahāvrata day (PB 5,6,9; AĀ 5,1,5).

As pointed out before, the mahāvrata is normally performed at the completion of the fire altar. It is here interesting to quote ŚB 9,1,1,1–2, where it is stated that the completed fire altar "now is the deity Rudra . . . Flaming he there stood longing for food. The gods were afraid of him lest he should hurt them. They spake: "Let us gather together food for him: therewith we will appease him! . . ." In ŚB 10,6,5,1 ff. hunger (=the hungry Rudra) is identified with Death.

During the chanting of the mahāvrata laud the sacrificers shout of joy; a hundred-stringed lute is played; and the wives of the sacrificers play cymbals, flutes, guitars, etc., and musicians blow conch shells and flutes. Wooden drums are beaten in every direction, and an "earth drum" is sounded. A religious student (brahmacārī: obviously=the *brahmabandhu māgadhadeśīya*) and the prostitute exchange obscene abuses, and the māgadha and the prostitute have intercourse. Of the other acts I shall mention here only that slave maidens go (or dance) around the mārjālīya fire, carrying pitchers full of water upon their heads, and smiting their right thighs with their right hands, they sing fertility songs with the refrain "This is honey".

That the hieros gāmos ——— there is some textual evidence that originally several couples were involved —— and the music and dance

indeed belong to the vrātya cult is confirmed also by an interesting passage of the Mahābhārata, first adduced and quoted in extenso by Charpentier (1909 : p. 162 ff.; cf. also Hauer 1927 : p. 234 ff.). In the Karṇaparvan (8,44,1-8,45,48 = 2024-2121) a fairly detailed description is given of the practices of the vrātyas (expressly named in the text) among the Vāhīka and Madra people : people drink intoxicating drinks, eat cow flesh, sing and dance; vrātya women dance stark naked and in intoxication; to the accompaniment of drums, flutes and conches they sing indecent songs, etc. This passage is of interest also in showing that although the Vedic texts usually refer specificly to the Easterners, i.e., to Magadha, when speaking of "demoniac" people — and that this country must have been considered as the chief place of the vrātya religion appears also from the name māgadha treated above — they were present also on the Western side of the Madhyadeśa. This is confirmed by a passage (already quoted by Charpentier l.c.) of the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa (1,7,3,8), where Agni is identified with Rudra, who according to the text is called Śarva by the Easterners, and Bhava by the Bāhikāh. The Vāhikāh/Bāhīkāh seem to have inhabited the upper Indus valley, and the Madrāh Kashmir, cf. Macdonell and Keith 1912 : s.v. Heesterman (1962) has already shown, that in Kuru-Pañcāla the vrātyas preceded the Vedic Aryans. On the face of this evidence, it would seem rather probable to me that also the *śiśnadevāh* of the Ṛgveda refer to phallic worshippers of Rudra, i.e., vrātyas.

According to Megasthenes the Indian Dionysos—in Greece Dionysos was a fertility god worshipped with orgiastic and exstatic rites and wine drinking — taught people to worship him by playing cymbals and drums (which they did also while marching to battle) and dancing satyrical dances (Arr. Ind. 7, 8). That Dionysos is Rudra, is confirmed by further particulars, namely, that he taught people to wear hair long in the god's honour (cf. above on the vrātyas and Rudra as having *keśāh* 'long hair')[1]

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1. Dahlquist (1962 : p. 188) is thus not right when he asserts that "we have no evidence from the texts suggesting that Siva's worshippers wore their hair long . . ."; but cf. ibid. p. 261'.

and to wear a turban on the head (cf. above on the vrātya chief and Rudra wearing an *uṣṇīṣa* : the word used in Arr. Ind. 7,9 is *mitra*, i.e., the Persian headdress, apparently standing for "Oriental" headdress in general); and further, that Dionysos was the god of war and agriculture (ib. 5–7).

It is widely agreed that the Indian drama has developed, as in Greece, of cultic rituals with music and dance, such as notably the mahāvrata:, cf. particularly the long study of Gonda (1943), who has pointed out i.a. such a parallellism as that between the introductory benediction, *nāndī*, of the classical drama, and the fertility song of 'benediction' (*nāndī*, *ānanda*) of the mahāvrata and the marriage ceremony. The origin of the dramatic art, including the dance, is traditionally ascribed to Śiva as the "lord of dance".

There is hardly any doubt that JB 2,69–70 is speaking of Rudra, when it speaks of the Death (Mṛtyu), who lost when rivalling with Prajāpati performing the Vedic soma sacrifice; Mṛtyu's armies are said to consist of music, dance, and chant (*yad vīṇāyām gīyate yan nṛtyate yad vṛthācaryate sā mṛtyoh senāsah*). [1] Cf. also above p. 36 on Mṛtyu in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad and on Māra.

92. The phallic dialogue of the mahāvrata is closely paralleled by that which accompanies the coition of the dead horse and the chief queen at the aśvamedha. It is striking that the aśvamedha is designated as an *utsannayajña* (cf. Śāṅkh. as quoted above on the coition at mahāvrata) as early as in ŚB 13,3,3,3. The words of this dialogue are taken from the last of the so called kuntāpa hymns, which already Hauer recognised as being of vrātya origin. This hymn, AS 20,136, is traditionally designated as *āhanasyāh* 'lecherous, obscene', and its purpose as such is to promote fertility: AB 6,36,5 *āhanasyād vai retah sicyate* (cf. Bloomfield 1899 : p. 99). It must be this dialogue which is meant, when JB 2,222 says that the vrātyas "speak what is

1. On this passage cf. also Heesterman 1964 : p. 12 ff.

obscene", for the very same term is used (*āhanasyam vadanti*); the vrātya origin of these (for the Vedic Aryans) "impure" acts is further confirmed by the statement of JB 2,222 concerning the vrātyas having the same meaning; *avratam amedhyam vadanti*, and of AĀ 1,1,3 regarding the mahāvrata: *bahu vā etasminn ahani kim ca kim ca vāraṇam kriyate.*

The vrātya origin of the aśvamedha is clear also from the mantra which according to ŚB 13,2,8,1 is used when the four wives of the king are led up to the dead horse; "Ambā! Ambikā! Ambālikā! There is no one to lead me." That the dead horse represents Rudra (as Tryambaka) is confirmed also by the next verse (VS 23,19), where it is addressed as the divine *Gaṇapati*: "With 'We call upon thee, the host-leader of hosts, O my true lord!' the wives walk round (the horse) [holding jars of water in their hands] . . . they also fan (*dhuvate*) it: thrice they walk round [sunwise] . . . thrice they walk round [non-sunwise] . . ." (ŚB 13,2,8,4). Similar fanning is performed also in the pravargya ceremony, which, as noted before must be of vrātya origin, as the mahāvīra pot with its *niskas* — figuring also in the aśvamedha — represents Rudra: "He then fans thrice . . . whilst muttering, 'Honey' each time; for honey means breath: he thus lays breath into it . . . They then fan it thrice in the non-sunwise way . . . They fan again in the sunwise way . . ." (ŚB 14,1,3,30–32). These two passages immediately call to mind the dancing-girls of the mahāvrata, who according to some texts go around sunwise, according to others first three times a non-sunwise, then three times sunwise, with water-jars (cf. aśvamedha), and singing "This is honey" (cf. pravargya). In the descriptions of the seat of udumbara wood discussed above (p. 47), the feet etc. of the seat are identified with the rathantara, bṛhat, vairūpa, vairāja, śakvarī (or mahānāmnī) and revatī sāmans or verses (e.g., in JB 2,25); it is most interesting that according to PB 7,8,9 ff.; JB 1,143; 3,118; and LŚS 3,5,1 ff. various noises are to be made while these very sāmans are chanted as the pṛṣṭha lauds at the pṛṣṭhya saḍaha, just as special noises are made when the mahāvrata laud is chanted as the pṛṣṭha laud. Here I would particularly like to mention one: the noise of wind is produced by shaking garments.

93. I have made this excursus on the vrātya ritual, from which I am convinced these peculiar acts –– which I hope to discuss soon in greater detail –– are derived, because I have wished to prove the vrātya origin of a peculiar practice, already early declared facultative (i.e., antiquated and out of fashion), which is connected with the Vedic ritual of raising the funeral monument (discussed above, p.). The following description, which now hardly needs commentaries, is based on Caland 1896 : p. 135 ff., and Kashikar's edition and translation of the corresponding passage of the Bhāradvāja Pitṛmedhasūtra.

If the rite of fanning (*dhuvanam*) is performed, an enclosure or hut with a bed is to be constructed in the middle of the burial place (śmaśāna) and the village (cf. the enclosure upon the border of the vedi, i.e., the dividing line between the sacred and profane, where the coition takes place : here obviously between the living and the dead). All participants carry a water pitcher and a parasol (*chattra*).[1] A peg of palāśa wood having a threefold stand (*methīm trivisūkām* Hir.; *tisrah pālāśyo methyah*) ––– could the iron tripods which belong to the characteristic finds of the Southern megaliths (cf. B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 227 f.) have had a similar ritual function ? ––– is fixed on the ground, and a non–sacral fire established. Then a śūdra or a brahmabandhu should have the following conversation with the foremost wife of the deceased : XX "N.N. the (the name of the deceased) seeks through me cohabitation with you"; she should reply : "I shall not give". The same procedure is repeated on the second day, but on the third the wife replies : "I shall give for one night (or three, five, or more upto one year)". After this the ashpot with the bones is placed on the ground below the threefold stand, and a pitcher with a hundred holes[2] is placed

1. As Caland notes (1896 : p. 135), the purpose of the parasol is not clear. Royal parasols were carried in Pandu's funeral procession (Kane 1953 : IV p. 223). In Kerala, some megaliths resemble so much parasols that they are called *kutaikal*: 'parasol stone' (cf Krishnaswami 1949 : p. 39 f. and pl. XVI).

2. Pitchers full of holes have been found in numbers from Harappan contexts (cf. e g. B. and R. Allchin 1968 : p. 136 fig. 28)

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upon the stand, filled with curds mixed with whey that ooze into the ashpot while feeding mantras are recited. Four brahmacārins with the hair on the right side of the head tied up and on the left side let loose, go around the stand three times anti-clockwise, smiting their left thighs and a red skin (*carman*) fastened to the hundred-holed pitcher, and fanning the ashpot with the end of their garments, or with fans shouting: "The skin, oyi, the skin, oyi!" Thereafter women with loosened hair do the same in the opposite direction, smiting their right thighs. While this is done lutes, flutes, pipes, conches and other musical instruments are to be played, an empty kettle beaten with an old shoe, songs sung, and dance performed (according to Baudhāyana by special dancing girls), (cf. KSS 21,3,11 *nṛttagītavāditravac ca,* scil. is that day). Much food is also to be offered on that day.

Further evidence for the death cult of the vrātyas is supplied by the Chāndogya Upanisad (8, 8, 5), where mention is made of heretics of asura nature—they are not givers, have no faith, and offer no sacrifices—who practice a cult of the dead: "They adorn the body of the deceased (*pretasya śarīram*) with what has been begged (*bhiksayā*), with cloths and ornaments, and think that thereby they will win the yonder world"; the doctrine (*upanisad*) of the Asuras differs namely from that of Prajāpati and the gods in that they take the word *ātman* in the sense of 'body'.

8. Descriptions of the vrātyas (continued):

85. The studies of Paul Horsch (1966) have clearly shown that the Vedic gāthā and śloka literature, which is older than the prose texts of the Brāhmaṇas and Upanisads, comes from quite different circles than the Vedic hymns, and that it is particularly closely related with the ksatriyas and the vrātyas. The close relation of the nārāśamsāni and of the bards (*māgadha*) with the latter has already been mentioned. It is no mere coincidence that during the aśvamedha, which appears to be also quite clearly of pre-Vedic vrātya origin, gāthās are sung of ancient kings, and "masters of lute-players" sing their own compositions in the sacrificing king's honour (cf. ŚB 13,4,3,1 ff.). Ancient legends are told, also in the course of the human sacrifice (probably the prototype of the aśvamedha), the royal consecration, and other

rites likewise of apparent vrātya origin. The best known of these legends is that of Śunaḥśepa, which even among the extant gāthās occupies a very prominent position (nos. 7-37 of the 194 gāthās and ślokas in Horsch 1966).

One of the reasons why I am taking up these gāthās and legends of the vrātyas, is that here, in the legend of Śunaḥśepa, we probably have, as noted already by Horsch (1966: p. 19: "*śrama* als Vorlaufer des *śramaṇa?*"), an ancient reference to a lonely wanderer that can be connected with the later śramaṇas: cf. particularly AB 7, 15, 2 (33, 3, 2) = ŚŚS 15, 19:

puṣpiṇyau carato jaṅghe, bhūṣṇur ātmā phalagrahīḥ I

śere 'sya sarve pāpmānaḥ, śrameṇa prapathe hatāś II *caraiveti*;

and AB 7, 15, 5 (33, 3, 5) = ŚŚS 15, 19:

caran vai madhu vindati, caran svādum udumbaram I

sūryasya paśya śremāṇam, yo na tandrayate caramś II *caraiveti.*

The lonely wanderer is Rohita, "the red one", from the Atharvaveda-saṃhita-(13,1-3) well known as the sun god, as indeed the last verse refers to the sun as the prototype of the wanderer. Note reference to honey and udumbara. There would seem to be many good reasons for considering Rudra "the red one" as the sun and identical with Rohita; here I shall mention only a few that are relevant for the present context. When Rohita, clad in mail (cf. the armour of the vrātyas and Rudra), escaped to the forest with his bow (bow is the characteristic weapon of Rudra, and the "wild" forest his special habitat), he was 16 years old, and ksatriya: this is the ideal age of the warrior, and of Skanda, the "eternal youth" (Sanatkumāra), the "son" of Śiva; and the ksatriya's symbolic colour is red. During his wandering years, Rohita seems to have collected the cows with which he bought Śunaḥśepa, by raiding, which appears to have belonged to the vrātya way of life (cf. Heesterman 1962).

The texts describing the vrātyas represent them as continually wandering, and particularly the verb *cal*-or *car*-is used (*vi-cal*-in AS 15, 2, 1 ff.; 15, 6, 1 ff.; 15, 9, 1 f.; 15, 14, 1 ff.; BaudhŚS 18, 25 *vrātyām caranti*; cf. also JB 2,222 *vrātyām adhāvayan*; PB 17,1,1-2 *vrātyām pravasanti*; and

AS 15, 1, 1 *vrātya āsīd īyamāna eva*, corresponding to the normal formula of the creation legends like *prajāpati evedaṁ agra āsīt*). That they in that imitate the *digvijaya* of the sun is suggested by the prominence of the directions in the vratya book (AS 15), the kuntāpa hymns (AS 20, 128, 1–5), and in the Rudra cult in general (Arbman 1922: p. 115 f.). The solar nature of Rudra is also underlined by his "eight names". Particularly important, of course, is the *tapas* ',asceticism'' but also "sun's glow", practised by the vrātya, Śiva as the arch ascetic, and the śramaṇas.

That wandering mendicants and ascetics indeed did exist already among the vrātyas is clear from the descriptions of the ekavrātya in AS 15. Compare particularly AS 15, 3, 1 "He stood a year erect; the gods said to him: Vrātya, why now standest thou?" (Follows description of the seat of udumbarā wood). AS 15, 11, 1-2: "So then, to whosesoever houses a thus-knowing vrātya may come as guest, himself coming up toward him, he should say: Vrātya, where hast thou abode? Vrātya, (here is) water; Vrātya, let them gratify (thee); Vrātya, be it so as is dear to thee; Vrātya, be it so as is thy will; Vrātya, be it so as is thy desire".

The descriptions of the vrātyas in the Brāhmaṇa texts make distinctions between different kinds of vrātyas, who may be reduced to two basic categories (cf. Heesterman 1962: p. 16). The peculiar name *śamanīcameḍhrāh* used of one category of the vrātyas in PB 17, 4 literally means, as Caland a. l. notes, 'having a not moving, hanging down penis'. Although the text says that "this (rite) should be performed by those who, being the oldest, lead a vrātya life", I do not think that the term exclusively denotes "those (Vrātyas) who by old age are precluded from sexual intercourse", as Caland translates. I have previously suggested (1969: I, 2 p. 6) that the word *śama* is derived from the Dravidian root *camai*–(DED 1935) meaning 'to be destroyed; to destroy'. The *śamanīcameḍhrāh* seem to be the very early predecessors of the sādhus described by dubois (1906: 3 p. 519) as follows:

"There are penitents professing the *moksha-sadhaka* even at the present day. Some of them go about quite naked, the object of this indecent practice being to convince the admiring public that they are no longer susceptible to the temptations of lust. There is also a class of

religious mendicants, called *Bairagis*, to be met with everywhere, who show themselves in public in a state of nature. The people evince the greatest admiration for these unclothed devotees, and express the utmost wonder as to how they succeed in controlling a passion which is generally regarded as beyond control. Some say that the *Bairagis* owe this impotence to extreme sobriety in eating and drinking, while others assert that it is the result of the use of certain drugs. As to their alleged sobriety it is a mere fable. Generally speaking, they eat all kinds of meat and drink all kinds of intoxicating liquors without any shame, the practice of *moksha-sadhaka* and their status as *Sannyasi* acquitting them of all blame in this respect. According in other authories, the *Bairagis* attain this condition by purely mechanical means, that is, they attach to their generative organs a heavy weight which they drag about until the power of muscles and nerves is completely destroyed."

Complete nakedness was required of the śramaṇas of the orthodox digambara Jainism. The relation between the vrātyas and the śramaṇas of Magadha is further underlined by the parallelism of the terms and titles. *Gaṇa* "host, group" is shared by the vrātyas as Rudra's "host", and by the early monk groups of Jainism (Schubring 1964: p. 222); cf. also the *saṅgha* of the Buddhists, the term being used also of vrātyas (cf. below). *Arhant* is a very importent title of both the Jains and the Buddists, and this title is used of both Rudra (RS 2, 33, 10), and of the priestly class of the vrātīnas, whose warriors are called (not kṣatriyas but) yaudhas (LSS 8, 5, 1-2 *vrātīnānām yaudhānām putrān anūcānān ṛtvijo vṛnīta śyenasya; arhatām eveti śāṇḍilyaḥ*). The presence of Śramaṇas among the megalithic people is suggested by the ritual tridents.

86. Another reason for my taking up the occasions of singing gāthās and telling ancient legends at the aśvamedha (and other vrātya rites), is that on these occasions also various sorts of people apparently belonging the vrātya gaṇas play their part. According to ŚB 13, 4, 3 these include, among others, such as snake-charmers, evil-doers and robbers, usurers performing magic tricks, fishermen and bird-catchers. It is interesting to note that the "catalogue of sciences", which permits us a glimpse in the pre-Vedic learning, and which is connected with these persons (Horsch 1966: p. 21), is obviously the same originally as that enumerated by Nārada—a

divine bard who figures also in the Śunaḥśepa legend—to Sanatkumāra, expressly identified as Skanda, in Chāndogya Upanisad 7, 1 (see the extensive study of the subject in Horsch 1966: p. 5–71).

As noted already, the Vedic texts describing the vrātyas emphasize their roaming around, with wagons and chariots, and PB 17, 1, 2 adds expressly taat they do not practise the study of the Veda, nor regular agriculture or trade (*hīnā vā ete hīyante ye vrātyām pravasanti: na hi brahmacaryam caranti, na kṛsim, na vaṇijyām*...). According to the archæological evidence, too, settled life in a larger scale, the second urbanization in India, started only with the arrival of the Vedic Aryans. We may also take the evidence of Megasthenes to refer to the vrātyas, when he says (Arr. Ind, 7, 2) that before Dionysos came and founded cities, etc., the Indians lived as nomads like those of the Scythians who do not practice agriculture but in their wagons roam now from this to that part of Scythia.

According to PB 17, 1, 5.11 the vrātya group is heterogeneous (*visama iva vai vrātah*), a statement which has long been seen confirmed by Kāśikā on Pāṇini 5, 3, 112 (cf. KB 16, 7 *pūgo vai rudrah*): *nānājātīyā aniyatavṛttayo 'rthakāmapradhānāh saṅghāh pūgāh.* cf. ibid. 113: *utsedhajīvinah saṅghā vrātāh,* and the saṅghas of more living on the making of weapons (*āyudhajīvin* in Pāṇ. 5, 3, 114f.).

The picture that the descriptions of the vrātya give of their character may be supplemented by the śatarudria litany. Rudra is here said to be the lord of footmen, warriors, assailers, thieves, robbers, cheaters, swindlers, burglars, pilferers, pluckers, bearers of arrows, bowmen, charioteers, makers of chariots, carpenters, potters, smiths, makers of arrows, hunters, dog-leaders, etc. This corresponds to the description which the dharmaśāstras give of the vrātyas.

87. Hauer (1927: p. 212) has seen a description of the vrātyas in the list of heretics given in Maitrī Upanisad 7, 8:

"Now, there are some who are continually hilarious, continually abroad, continually begging, continually living upon handicraft. And moreover, there, are others who are town-beggars, who perform the sacrifice for the unworthy

who are disciples of sudras, and who, though sudras, know the scriptures (*sasta*). And moreover, there are others, who are rogues *(cata)*, who wear their hair in a twisted knot *(jata)*, who are dancers *(nata)*, mercenaries *(bhata)*, religious mendicants (*pravrajita*), actors, renegades in the royal service, and the like. And moreover, there are others who say 'For a price we allay (the evil influences) of Yaksas, Raksasas, Bhutas, spirit-bands, goblins, serpents, vampires, and the like' [N. B. Rudra is the possessor of the medicines, the *bhesajas*]. And moreover, there are others who falsely wear the red robe, ear-rings, and skulls. And moreover, there are others who love to be a stumbling-block among believers in the Vedas by the stratagem of deceptive arguments in a circle, and false and illogical examples. With these one should not associate. Verily, these creatures are evidently robbers, unfit for heaven" (Transl Hume)

In the mediaeval Bengal Rudra was an agricultural god, and a god of "rustics, vagabonds, low-caste people and outcastes living on the fringe of respectable society" (Chaudhuri cited by Gonda 1960: p. 85). Dubois (1906[3] : p. 65 ff.) gives long descriptions of nomadic castes and vagabond tribes living on charlatanry, magic and witchcraft, begging, selling things (salt. etc.), robbing and herding.

In a recent paper (1971) P. K. Misra has analized the present day "itinerant groups which move about at regular intervals in the villages, towns and cities of India". Begging, mostly in the name of religion, and forecasting are the most popular occupations. "Those who traditionally beg, dress themselves elaborately and apply various kinds of religious marks on their body to present an appearance of a sadhu" (p. 325). Other itinerant groups trade in various kinds of goods from house to house, while others specialize in crafts (p. 328). Others provide specialist services as entertainers (athletes, snake charmers, etc.) or as supplyers of herbal medicines. Some sing devotional songs, perform puppet shows and e. g. "Ram–Sita marriage with the help of two sacred cattle which they take with them, and to the accompaniment of local music" (p. 328). Some of these nomadic groups move throughout the year, others only a part of year. Generally during the rainy season they return "to their respective base camps for a brief period when other members of their group also join them. They utilize this period in settling their outstanding problems,

in arranging marriages, etc." "The area of movement of each itinerant group is of its own choise, dependiug upon its traditional practise, the role it plays and demands of the people". Of the 19 groups visiting Mysore that formed the object of Misra's study, three had their base camps in Rajasthan, one in Mahārāstra, one in Madras, and three in Andhra Predesh, all except the Rajasthanis confining their movements within Peninsular India (p. 324).

IV. The cult of Aiyanar

Assuming that it was the vrātyas who introduced the megalithic culture to the South India, and that they were such "travelling specialists who provide services of various kinds in the villages, where such specialists are otherwise lacking", functioning as "one of the media of popular religious instruction" as well as "communicants of culture" in general (cf. Misra 1971: p. 318), could explain also the origins of the Aiyanār cult throughout South India, and vise versa be confirmed by it.

The name of Aiyanār[1] seems to be derived, through Prakrit Ayya, from Sanskrit Ārya (as he is also directly called).[2] He is also called Śāstā "teacher", or in Tamilized form Cāttān. Aiyanār is worshipped as the protector of the village and fertilizer of its fields. During the night he rides, as a warrior, horse-back or on (royal) white elephant, through the fields followed by an equestrian retinue of heroes fallen in battle. He has however, also a dark aspect, personified as Kaṛuppan or Kaṛuppu-cāmy "the black (lord)", the Bhūtanātha, lord of terrible demons (pēy)--at places Kaṛuppan is a hunter god worshipped with wild dances--and his temple is usually side by side with that of Aiyanār. Aiyanār's cult involves two festivals a year: one in September, when he is worshipped together with the lady of the village, (normally the smallpox goddess Māriyammā 'rain mother or lady'), apparently in his capacity of rain-maker; and another, in May–June, when clay horses (or rather, elephants) are erected, mainly in the temple of the "Black-God" (who actually seems to be in charge of the nightly rides), and on the second day, a bull race takes place in front of Aiyanār's temple. The sacred bull of Aiyanār is identified with Śiva's bull Nāndī, and even with Śiva himself. Aiyanār is

1. The following description of Aiyanar is based on Renou 1947: p. 488; Gonda 1963: II p. 14; Kramrisch 1969 p. 32-37; and Dumont 1970.

2. Cf. also DED 163.

further connected with Śiva through the legend, according to which he is Hariharaputra: the son of Śiva seduced by the female form of Viṣṇu. Apart from his being connected with the bull of Śiva, and the situation of his temple on the tanks fertilizing the fields, Aiyanār's fertility aspect is made clear also by his being worshipped in linga form, and from figures of children offered to him by the childless.

The name of Aiyanār, the legends associating him with Śiva, and, above all, the horses play an important role in his cult, all refer to an Aryan origin. As Aiyanār seems to be attested already in the Cilappatikāram (ca. 3rd cent. A. D.), and as his cult has a very popular character --he is the male god of practically every village in South India--it is indeed very difficult to see where and how the Aryan elements[1] of his cult came from, if they did not come with the megalithic culture and with such sort of nomadic people as the vrātyas. The ambivalent nature of Aiyaṇār, and his express relations with Śiva, definitely support his derivation from the Rudra we have been considering in connection with the vrātyas.

1. The figure of Aiyanar-Karuppan certainly perpetuates also earlier, pre-Aryan traditions of South India, above all the cult of the Dravidian god Murukan.

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AĀ = Aitareya-Āraṇyaka
AB = Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa
ĀpŚS = Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra
AS = Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā (Śaunaka)
BĀU = Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka-Upanisad
BaudhŚS = Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra
ChU = Chāndogya-Upanisad
JB = Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa
JŚS = Jaiminīya-Śrautasūtra (Bhavatrāta's Jaiminīya-Śrautasūtra-Vṛtti, edited by Premṇidhi Śāstri, New Delhi 1966, Śata-Piṭaka Series 40)
DŚS = Drāhyāyaṇa-Śrautasūtra (see Parpola 1968—)
KB = Kausītaki-Brāhmaṇa
KS = Kaṭha-Saṃhitā
KŚS = Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra
LŚS = Lāṭyāyana-Śrautasūtra (see Parpola 1968—)
MGS = Mānava-Gṛhyasūtra
MŚS = Mānava-Śrautasūtra (edited and transl. by J.M. van Gelder. New Delhi 1961–1963, Śata-Piṭaka Series 17 & 27)
PB = Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa
RS = Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā
ŚĀ = Śāṅkhāyana-Āraṇyaka
ŚB = Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (Mādhyandina)
SB = Saḍviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa
ŚŚS = Śāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra

TB = Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa
TS = Taittirīya-Saṁhitā
VS = Vājasaneyi-Samhitā (Mādhyandina)

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ADDENDA

To *Introduction*, at the end: The reason why I have been inclined to associate the Harappan Dravidian with the Southern group is the homophony between the Dravidian root *aṛu* "to cut, to harvest" (DED 266), and the South Dravidian *aṛu* "six" (against original *caṛu* "six", DED 2051): the Sanskrit name of the Pleiades, *Kṛttikā* "razor, cutting knife", which differs from all other Indo-European names of this asterism, seem to me to be a translation of the Harappan name (in the Indus inscriptions we have number six+fish=*aṛu-mīn* "six-star", the Tamil name of the Pleiades) which appears to have already been associated with the harvesting, the beginning of the year in the spring. Because of this association, the Aryans would have translated the homophony *aru*=*kṛt-* instead of the original star-name which referred to the six stars of the asterism.

In my paper "On the protohistory of the Indian languages in the light of archæological, linguistic and religious evidence" (to appear in: "South Asian Archæology—1973", edited by J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, Leiden), I have presented grounds for identifying the Harappan language as the proto-North Dravidian. This causes difficulties for the above interpretation of the name Kṛttikā, which I, however, still think is worth consideration.

In the above mentioned paper I am suggesting a full-scale correlation of the archæological and linguistic evidence relating to the Indian protohistory. While referring the reader to the paper, I would like to mention a few conclusions that are of importance with regard to the subject of the present study, which was completed earlier.

The North Iranian Gray ware culture represented by Hissar III, from which the Aryan elements of the Indian chalcolithic cultures of the 2nd millennium B. C. seem to be derived, may have separated from the Proto-Aryan culture very early, before the soma cult developed. The transition over the Caucasus may be represented by the Early Kuban

culture in its Tsarskaya variety, which is connected with the Hissar III culture through its metallurgy. The vrātyas and their dead cult would of course primarily represent the traditions of this earliest wave. The megalithic burial in its turn seems to represent originally the Kuban development of the same proto-Aryan burial practice from which also that of vrātyas is derived (although the latter has been influenced also by Harappan traditions). For reasons put forward in the paper cited, I think the Middle Kuban culture, and its later phase, the Late Kuban culture to which the megalithic cists with portholes are characteristic, would seem to represent Aryans belonging to the branch left in South Russia by the earliest wave. The Ṛgvedic Aryans would belong to this second wave, but they would have left the Kuban region before the megaliths developed. It is immigrants from the Late Kuban culture that I think brought the megaliths to India, to the Deccan, where they merged with the earlier "vrātya" Aryans represented by the chalcolithic black-and-red ware, and thereafter this end product infiltrated to the entire peninsula.

I would like to make reference to a recent publication which I presume to be of great importance but that I have not yet seen: L. S. Leshnik, *Burials of the Early Iron Age in South India: Pandukal complex.* Wiesbaden 1973.

To part IV: For Aiyanār see also M. E. Adiceam, *Contribution a l' etude d' AiyaNār-Sāstā,* Pondichery 1967 (Publications de l' Institut Francais d'Indologie, 32) and J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "Aiyanār: An aspect of Hindu influences in Ceylon" (stencilled lecture held at the "Seminar on aspects of religion in South Asia", London 1971).

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